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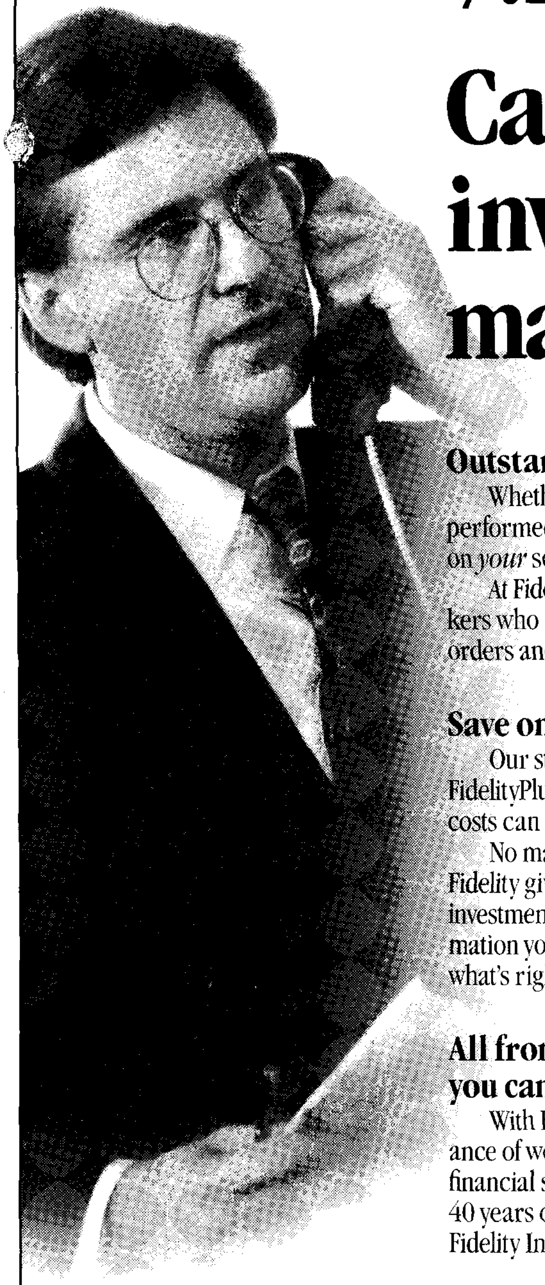

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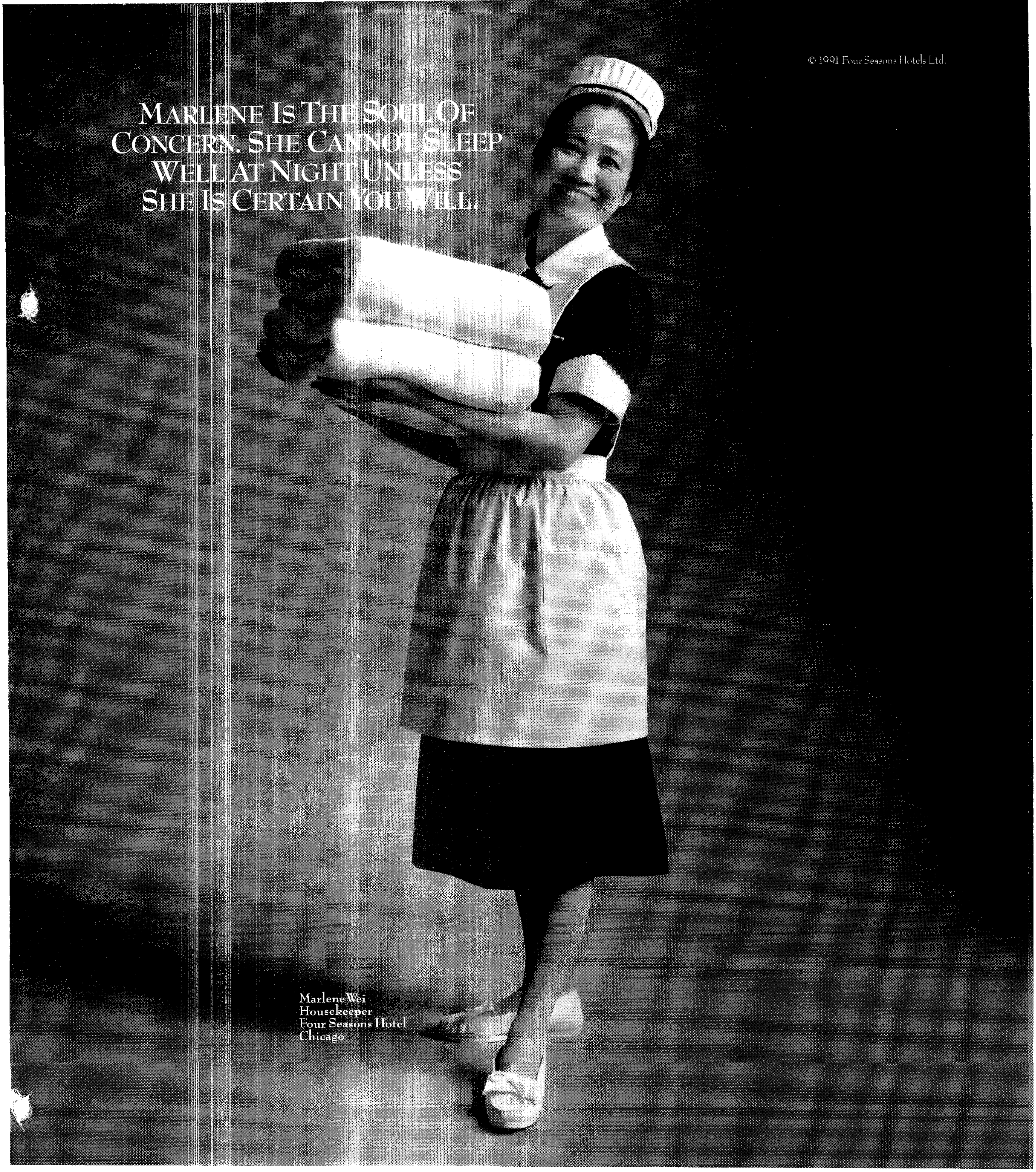
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

A *disproportionate* number of the most memorable movies released during the last year or two—documentaries such as "Let's Get Lost," "American Dream," and "Paris Is Burning"—have emphasized fact over fiction. If you focus on one-person shows, a genre that has swallowed up more and more New York stages, the situation in the theatre has been somewhat similar. Whether the mode is impersonation (Eileen Atkins as Virginia Woolf, Julie Harris as Isak Dinesen, Tracey Ullman as Florence Aadland) or confession (Spalding Gray, Eric Bogosian), the solo turn relies increasingly on "real life." As if to take this trend to its logical extreme, Rick Reynolds announces at the beginning of his "Only the Truth Is Funny" (Westside Theatre) that *nothing* he is about to tell you is fabricated. That is, unlike many other comedians groomed by the management team of Jack Rollins and Charles Joffe, Mr. Reynolds does not unleash hordes of exaggerated characters upon us. No, he is content to sing of himself. He tells stories about himself and his long-suffering mother, himself and his bull-headed brother, himself and his baby sister. He talks about his days as a hippie manqué, about his years spent combing philosophy and religion for "answers," about his nagging desire for fame. As the evening winds up, he tells us more and more about his new-found happiness as a husband, a father, and the caretaker of a Victorian house and garden in a picturesque community north of San Francisco. The show is basically just yuppie uplift, and rather smarmy uplift at that, but through it all Mr. Reynolds remains smart and funny—a combination that seems easy only to those who have never tried to draw laughs in public.

Jane Anderson, author of "Food and Shelter"

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Casanova—A new play by Constance Congdon, directed by Michael Greif. Previews through May 26. Opens May 28 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Charge It, Please—A comedy by Carlos Gorbea. Three performances a week are in English; four are in Spanish. Preview on May 22. Opens May 23 at 8. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

Food and Shelter—Kelly Coffield heads the cast of a new play by Jane Anderson. Previews through May 28. Opens May 29 at 8. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	20	21	22	23	24	25
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The Goat—A comedy by Ben Morse, set in Brooklyn. Previews May 23-28. Opens May 29 at 8. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 255-7190.)

Lips Together, Teeth Apart—Christine Baranski, Anthony Heald, Swoosie Kurtz, and Nathan Lane in a new play by Terrence McNally. John Tillinger directed. Previews begin May 28. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Mr. Gogol and Mr. Preen—A new comedy by Elaine May, with Zohra Lampert, William H. Macy, and Mike Nussbaum. Directed by Gregory Mosher. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Night Sky—A play by Susan Yankowitz, presented by the Women's Project. Joseph Chaikin directed. Edward Baran, Tom Caylor, Aleta Mitchell, Paul Zimet, and Lizbeth Zindel make up the cast. Preview on May 21. Opens May 22 at 8. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 768-4334.)

Satan Never Sleeps—A play, with music, by Ronald Wyche and Weldon. With Timothy Askew, Joe Kelly, Frederick Owens, Janet Jessie Richards, and Lee Summers. Preview on May 22. Opens May 23 at 8, and runs through June 30. (Billie Holiday, 1368 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-0918.)

Song of Singapore—A musical by Erik Frandsen, Michael Garin, Robert Hipkens, Paula Lockheart, and Allan Katz, which is set in a Singapore night club in 1941. Previews through May 22. Opens May 23 at 8. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.)

The Subject Was Roses—John Mahoney, Dana Ivey, and Patrick Dempsey in a revival of the 1964 play by Frank D. Gilroy. Directed by Jack Hofsiss. In previews. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

The Way of the World—A modern-dress version of Congreve's play, directed by David Greenspan. Opens May 21 at 6:45. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

NEW THIS SEASON

And the World Goes 'Round: The Songs of Kander & Ebb—A musical revue, with Bob Cuccioli, Karen Mason, Brenda Pressley, Jim Walton, and Karen Ziemba. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 246-0102.)

Breaking Legs—Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia have the leads in a new comedy by Tom Dulack. John Tillinger directed. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Circle Repertory Company—Presenting **WALKING THE DEAD,** a new play by Keith Curran. Scotty Bloch, Ashley Gardner, Joe Mantello, Christopher Shaw, Cotter Smith, Myra Taylor, and Tyrone Wilson make up the cast. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes June 2.)

Daugherty & Field Off-Broadway—The cabaret team of Bill Daugherty and Robin Field holds forth in a revue of swing and show tunes. (Double Image, 15 Vandam St. 924-1120. Closes June 8.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—Presenting the 1991 festival of one-act plays. Through May 26: "Naomi in the Living Room," by Christopher Durang; "Where Were You When It Went Down," by David Mamet; "You Can't Trust the Male," by Randy Noojin; "Intimacy," adapted from a Raymond Carver story by Harris Yulin; and "A Way with Words," by Frank D. Gilroy. . . . ¶ Starting May 29 and running through June 9: "Practice," by Leslie Ayvazian; "Face Divided," by Edward Allan Baker; "Rapid Eye Movement," by Susan Kim; "Over Texas," a short opera by Michael John La Chiusa; and "Can Can," by Romulus Linney. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405. The E.S.T. festival continues through June 23.)

Fayebird—A new play by Diana Amsterdam, presented by the American Jewish Theatre. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes May 26.)

Fiddler on the Roof—The Israeli actor Topol makes a commanding Tevye—the best of all of them—in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and staging are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the Patricia Zipprodt originals. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/3/90.) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.)

Fridays—A 1981 play by Andrew Johns, with Henderson Forsythe and John Peakes. Presented by the Riverside Shakespeare Company and directed by Gus Kaikkonen. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

The Good Times Are Killing Me—The cartoonist Lynda Barry devised this memory play of words and pop tunes about a racially mixed neighborhood. At the heart of it is the friendship of two little girls, one white, the other black, who are delightfully portrayed by Angela Goethals and Chandra Wilson. The undercurrent of serious comment on race doesn't add much, but every humorous scene scores a bull's-eye. Also with Kim Staunton, Wendell Pierce, and Holly Felton. Mark Brokaw directed. (5/6/91) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Gypsy—This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast (led by Tyne Daly, Crista Moore, and Jonathan Hadary) so engaging—that we think anyone would be the happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). (12/4/89) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Haunted Host—Harvey Fierstein and Jason Workman star in a revival of Robert Patrick's 1964 play. "Pouf Positive," a new comedy by Mr. Patrick, is the curtain-raiser. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226. Closes June 2.)

The Hunchback of Notre Dame—Everett Quinton's new show, which is billed as "a quasimusical." (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

I Hate Hamlet—In Paul Rudnick's jokey farce, Nicol Williamson gives a stunning comedy performance as the ghost of John Barrymore, summoned to aid a young Hollywood actor who has been booked to play Hamlet in the Park. Mr. Williamson is ably supported by some of the other actors, but the show boils down to a marvellous solo turn. (4/22/91) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Ivy Rowe—Barbara Bates Smith in a one-woman show adapted from Lee Smith's novel "Fair and Tender Ladies." Directed by Mark Hunter. (Provincetown, 133 Macdougal St. 477-5048.)

Jackie Mason: Brand New—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—The final play of the season is **THE EMIGRANTS,** a 1968 work by Slawomir Mrozek. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060. Closes June 2.)

Letters to a Student Revolutionary—A play by Elizabeth Wong, presented by the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes June 1.)

Lost in Yonkers—There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (3/11/91) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Miss Saigon—Oh, the horror! The horror! (4/29/91) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

Monster in a Box—A quick return engagement of Spalding Gray's latest autobiographical

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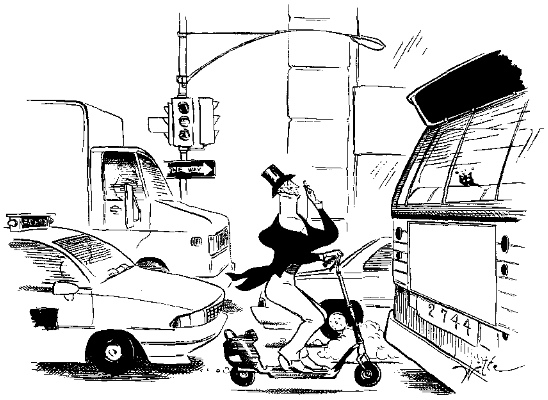

monologue. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. May 20 and May 26-27.)

The Old Boy—A. R. Gurney's play about a distinguished alumnus who returns to a prestigious prep school in New England to deliver a commencement address is a disappointment in spite of a lot of funny lines along the way. The acting, under John Rubinstein's direction, is good throughout; that of Clark Gregg, as the hero's political secretary, is especially good. (5/20/91) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes June 2.)

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Only the Truth Is Funny—The comedian Rick Reynolds' one-man show. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 246-0102.)

Our Country's Good—A play by Timberlake Wertenbaker about a group of convicts in Botany Bay rehearsing a production of George Farquhar's "The Recruiting Officer" in 1789. Mark Lamos's production is marred by truly terrible acting, across the board, from a cast led by Peter Frechette. The play tries hard to identify itself as Serious Theatre, but never gets much beyond the initial irony inherent in the idea of society's outcasts performing a play written for and about high society. (5/20/91) (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 307-4100.)

Pageant—A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. With Randl Ash, J. T. Cromwell, and Russell Garrett. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.)

Penn & Teller's Refrigerator Tour—The heavenly twain meet again. The new tricks are just as mysterious (and frightening) as the old ones. As for the tricksters, their bogus candor is intact, and they've never been funnier. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.)

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui—John Turturro and David Patrick Kelly star in a production of Brecht's play. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes June 9.)

A Room of One's Own—Eileen Atkins is sublime in this stage adaptation of the Virginia Woolf essay. Easily the most civilized entertainment on offer, this one-woman show is something every lively-minded young woman above the age of fifteen—fourteen if she's particularly lively-minded—will want to see. (3/18/91) (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Closes June 9.)

The Secret Garden—This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (5/13/91) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

States of Shock—A new play by Sam Shepard, starring John Malkovich. Bill Hart was the director. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes June 2.)

The Substance of Fire—Ron Rifkin gives an impeccable performance as a publisher—a refugee from Nazi Germany—whose difficulties with his grown children are no greater than those with himself. The play, by Jon Robin Baitz, is not flawless, but it is consistently absorbing and very well acted, under the direction of Daniel Sullivan. With Sarah Jessica Parker, Patrick Breen, Jon Tenney, and Maria Tucci. (4/1/91) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

The Will Rogers Follies—The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging, amusing Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (5/13/91) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

LONG RUNS

CATS: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turned thirty-one this month. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1991:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION:** You're best off knowing nothing about the John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.) . . . **SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN:** This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray, it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of gospel singers have been invited to appear. With Reathel Bean, Kevin Chamberlain, Robert Olsen, Connie Shulman, Mimi Bessette, John Foley, and Susan Mansur. Directed by Alan Bailey. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

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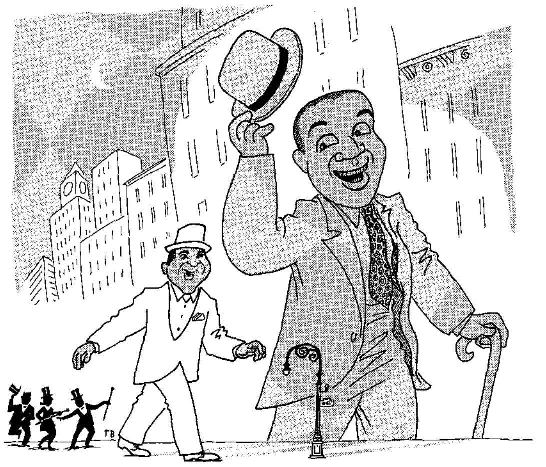
DANCE

Bill Robinson's contribution to tap dancing is exact and specific: He brought it up on the toes, dancing upright and swinging.—*from "Jazz Dance," by Marshall and Jean Stearns.*

Robinson's upscale combo of lift and swing made him more than a great tap dancer: it made him a star. In 1989, Congress set his birthday—May 25—as the date of National Tap Dance Day, one of the more reasonable measures that Washington has taken in the past few years with respect to the arts. New York observes the occasion with a week of performances and tap-jams; on the day itself, a battery of tappers, led by Leslie (Bubba) Gaines, will re-create a Bill Robinson event from 1939. That year, the dancer celebrated his sixty-first birthday by tapping from 61st Street and Central Park West to Times Square, where he was starring in a show called "Hot Mikado." (This year, the route will originate at Lincoln Center.)

Now, wait a minute: "Hot Mikado"? We snooped around, and here's what we learned: "The Mikado," by Gilbert and Sullivan, opened in 1885. After a few zillion performances, people began devising new ways to spruce it up. In 1938, in Chicago, the Federal Theatre Project put on an all-black, jazzy version called "The Swing Mikado." The thirty-year-old Mike Todd wanted to produce it in New York. The feds, however, wanted to bring it in themselves, so Todd put together his own edition, "Hot Mikado," starring Bill Robinson (in gold from head to toe) in the title role, and featuring a cast of "sixty serenading sugarplums." Todd brought his show to Broadway, where it played across the street from "The Swing Mikado." The souvenir program for "Hot Mikado" read, "The entire score of this production is that of Sir Arthur Sullivan's 'The Mikado' set to modernized tempos. There is no interpolated music of any kind." (It didn't mention that numbers had been cut.) After eighty-five performances and good reviews, Todd moved his "Mikado" to the New York World's Fair. The director was the esteemed Hassard Short, of the Irving Berlin Music Box Revues, and "The Band Wagon." The dances were by Truly McGee, a former Roxyette, and the dancers included twelve of Whitey's Lindy Hoppers, among them Al Minne and Leon James. A program photograph shows that the Lindy Hoppers performed in their regular clothes and shoes, in a set with an ice-cream-sundae mountain and New York-type street lamps. The lamps themselves seem to be Japanese lanterns, and if you look closely the lanterns turn out to be dice.



New York City Ballet—May 21 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "The Cage," "Four Gnossiennes," and "La Valse." . . . ¶ May 22 at 8: "Mozartiana," "Ives, Songs," and "Brahms/Handel." . . . ¶ May 23 at 8: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "Calcium Light Night," "Eight More," and "Brahms/Handel." . . . ¶ May 24 at 8: "Bugaku," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Four Gnossiennes," and "Western Symphony." . . . ¶ May 25 at 2: "Waltz Trilogy," "Bugaku," and "Western Symphony." . . . ¶ May 25 at 8: "Mozartiana," "Fearful Symmetries," and "Dances at a Gathering." . . . ¶ May 26 at 1: "Waltz Trilogy," "Stravinsky Violin Concerto," and "Chaconne." . . . ¶ May 26 at 7: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "The Cage," "Other Dances," and "Chaconne." . . . ¶ May 28 at 8: "Waltz Trilogy," "Calcium Light Night," "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," and "Brahms/Handel." . . . ¶ May 29 at 8: "Souvenir de Florence," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Four Gnossiennes," and "Western Symphony." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 30.)

American Ballet Theatre—May 20-21 at 8, May 22 at 2 and 8, and May 23 at 8: "La Bayadère." . . . ¶ May 24 at 8 and May 25 at 2 and 8: "Concerto," "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," and "Gaîté Parisienne." . . . ¶ May 27 at 8: "Ballet Imperial," "Other Dances," and "Gaîté Parisienne." . . . ¶ May 28 at 8: "Birthday Offering," "Jardin aux Lilas," and "Sinfonietta." . . . ¶ May 29 at 8: "Push Comes to Shove," "Nine Sinatra Songs," and "In the Upper Room." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 22.)

José Greco Company—Opening performances of a three-week engagement, which will run through June 9. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 21-24 at 8, May 25 at 2 and 8, May 26 at 2 and 7:30, and May 28-29 at 8.)

Bebe Miller—With her company, in "The Hendrix Project" (New York première) and "Rain." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. May 23-26 at 8:30. For reservations, call 529-2318.)

Louis Johnson Dance Theatre Ensemble—The resident company of the Henry Street Settlement in contemporary dance-theatre works. (466 Grand St. 598-0400. May 24-25 at 7 and May 26 at 3.)

"Tap Extravaganza"—A National Tap Dance Day event, with Honi Coles, Peg Leg Bates, the Original Hoofers, the American Tap Dance Orchestra, DancEllington, and many others. (Norman Thomas High School, 111 E. 33rd St. May 25 at 8. For information about tickets, call 597-4613.)

NIGHT LIFE

In the loosely knit sixties-garage-rock scene, the Lyres enjoy near-godlike status. This is not the Manchester sixties scene, but the American one, which has been around a lot longer and is grittier than its paisley British counterpart. If bands like the Lyres stubbornly cling to their narrow slice of rock-and-roll history, at least they've chosen a fertile period. At its best, as in the hands of the Boston-based quartet, this music is a pure distillation of frenzy, lust, and rebellion. Since its inception over a decade ago, the scene has remained on the fringe; the Lyres, for instance, do well in Europe, where they spend much of the year touring, but Stateside they have to settle for a small cult following. The New York chapter of that cult turned out in force to see the band perform at Flannery's the other night, braving Persian Gulf-like conditions. (The club, which was recently renovated, still has some ventilation problems.)

The Lyres, who formed in 1979 have had a turbulent history. Jeff Conolly (a.k.a. Mono Man), the group's lead singer, keyboardist, and songwriter, has a penchant for firing band members and for stage antics that make Nicol Williamson look tame. (Lyres fans spend almost as much time swapping Mono Man stories as they do listening to the music.) Though the group has long been a fixture on the New York club scene, they had been absent for a while when Conolly showed up at Maxwell's a few months ago with the band's original lineup. That same formation appeared at Flannery's, and the band has never sounded better. The Lyres play blues-based roots rock with no frippery, a sound composed of crunching guitar riffs, unstoppable rhythmic grooves, pounding organ chords, and Conolly's hard-edged, unsentimental vocals. (The group's forebears seem to include the Animals, the Sonics, and the rougher-edged Beatles.) Tearing through a set that included some of their best songs, they sounded every bit the well-seasoned road outfit. The pace never slowed, making for a high-spirited, sweaty dance party.

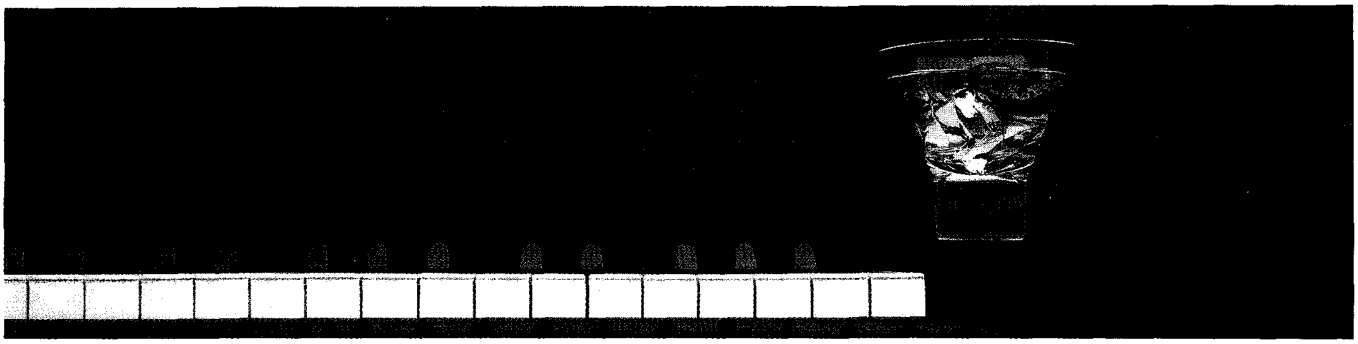
(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

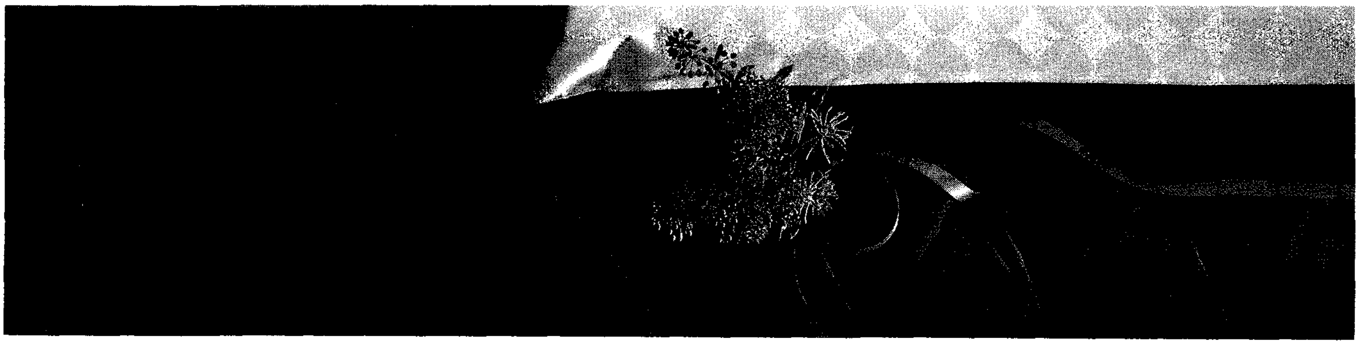
Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—A quirky, endearing Village watering hole, perpetually decorated for the holidays—all of them. The musicians work in the back of the room, in a well ringed by a bar. Tuesdays through Thursdays belong to Al Bundy, Fridays and Saturdays to Mabel Godwin, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band. Music from nine-thirty.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slightly decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. On May 21, **RITA MC KENZIE** begins a tribute to Ethel Merman, whom she describes as "bright, brassy, and ballsy." **MARNI NIXON,** a fine, precise soprano who's still best known for dubbing songs in "My Fair Lady," "West Side Story," and "The King and I," concludes her engagement here on May 26.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. **VIC JURIS, RODNEY JONES,** and **GENE BERTONCINI** participate in a Jazz Guitar Summit beginning May 28. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? **CARMEN MC RAE,** one





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of the foremost jazz and scat singers around, is in ascendance May 21-26. Last year, Ms. McRae, who lives on the West Coast and only occasionally makes the trek east, came out with a well-received album of Thelonious Monk tunes with words by various lyricists. **GEORGE HOWARD** takes hold on May 28. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. Former Doors keyboardist **RAY MANZAREK,** who survived the mayhem of Morrison only to see himself portrayed by Kyle MacLachlan wearing a fright wig, is appearing here on May 23, with Michael McClure. The accomplished jazz vocalist **BETTY CARTER** claims May 24-25. Shows at eight and eleven.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. Pianist **JAMES WILLIAMS,** guitarist **CALVIN NEWBORN,** and bassist **IRA COLEMAN** work out May 20-25, with drummer **KENNY WASHINGTON** pitching in May 24-25. Pianist **MULGREW MILLER** and bassist **ROBERT HURST** commence on May 27. Music after nine-forty-five. Dining.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—An unpretentious storefront café devoted to such things as Irish stew and the *Irish Times*. There's no stage per se, but bohemian musicians gather around a piano and work up wistful sets while bohemian patrons sit writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over one of the two varieties of beer sold here: Budweiser and Rolling Rock. The café is a nice place to while away an hour, and you never know who'll turn up and tune up. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to His Shortness, **BOBBY SHORT,** Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by heavy-metal fans, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glides across the floor, lost in a nostalgic reverie; an eager young man, his tie loosened, his face perspiring, throws his date around like a crazed cossack. **PANAMA FRANCIS,** a big-band-era veteran, leads his **SAVOY SULTANS** on May 26. Music from eight to midnight.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—Jazz clubs aren't always known for their romantic atmosphere, but Condon's earns higher marks than most. It's a low-ceilinged basement establishment, with lemon walls and abundant candlelight. They rearranged the furniture here a while back, so that now a greater number of people look at the stage rather than at a pole. The **GEORGE MRAZ** quartet is on duty May 21-26. Music after nine.

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Young, loud, and rude. N.Y.U. students like it here, as do punks, weekend punks, and anyone with a taste for rough-and-tumble garage-rock music. There's not a lot to look at—except the band and your fellow-patrons. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at ten, and Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—An Irish pub in the meat-packing district, not too far from the boondocks. In the front room, barbirds study the TV and growl about one thing or another, and in the back room another crowd listens to Irish folk musicians (on Fridays) and native string bands (on Saturdays). John Whelan, who knows his way around a button accordion, provides the tunes on May 24.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—The seating arrangement in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement makes flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. The Memphis-bred tenor-sax man **GEORGE COLEMAN,** who lent some fire to several early B. B. King records, plays here through May 26. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Flannery's, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—On the ground floor is a well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features—pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports—and a few of the near-classics: a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis. Downstairs is a low-ceilinged space that looks like a rec room; on weekends (from eleven) and Tuesdays (from nine) it's home to an enlightened mixture of garage-rock, rockabilly, surf-punk, and psychedelic-rock bands.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—With jazz you get eggroll. At this posh-looking two-floor Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of business people and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find a Steinway grand, which belongs to the ever-swinging **DAVE MC KENNA** for the next couple of weeks. Music from six-thirty.

Kilimanjaro, 531 W. 19th St. (627-2333)—The northern branch of the popular Washington, D.C., night spot. As the name suggests, African music is the sine qua non, be it live or d.j.-spun. Calypso, reggae, and world-beat formats also turn up; in any case, the dance floor seldom lies fallow. Reggae singer **RITA MARLEY,** widow of the late Bob Marley, performs on May 24. Music from eleven-thirty.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. Stride pianist **JUDY CARMICHAEL** and saxophonist **MIKE HASHIM** team up May 22-25, and again beginning May 29. Music from about nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A frat house for the avant-garde. In some ways, the Knitting Factory doesn't really belong in New York: the cover charge is too reasonable, the management is too laid-back, the audiences are too polite. It's a slice of post-collegiate counter-culture that somehow landed on Houston Street, of all places. The music is another story—much of the time, it exemplifies urban angst. Highlights this week: Bianca (Flystrip) Miller, Amy Allison, and Oren Bloedow on May 24; guitarist **JEAN-PAUL BOURELLY** on May 25; and Triad, with pianist **GERI ALLEN,** May 27-28. Music after nine.

Lauterbach's Brooklyn Beat, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—It's an improbable bar in an unlikely location, but Lauterbach's has spawned a scene of sorts—and they have a wall of press clippings to prove it. In its short life as a rock venue (it had a longer one as a bar where Archie Bunker might feel at home), the place has become HQ for a tight little community of Brooklyn bands, a development that has apparently brought in enough money for the club's recent face-lift. Still, it's not like you need a tux to get in the door.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant-and-bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry–potato chip hybrids. The venerable blues guitarist and singer **ALBERT KING** is in command May 24-25. Music after nine. Dining.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A bright spot on the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. The guitarist and singer **JOHNNY CLYDE COPELAND,** who'll perform here May 23-24, is a powerful presence. A short, barrel-chested man with extraterrestrial eyes, Copeland sings/shouts with a gospel fervor that can blow other musicians off the stage. Sets from nine-fifteen, except Sundays, when they begin at eight.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—There's more to Michael's Pub than Woody Allen, whose occasional Monday-night Dixieland binges have given the place a little star cachet. Non-filmmakers can usually be found onstage here the rest of the week, in a main dining room that strives for the appearance of a British pub but looks more like a good old American family restaurant. Still, there's a real nice red telephone booth when you walk in the door. Jelly Roll Morton and his Red Hot Peppers are the subject of a celebration here just now. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot*. There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" Singer **MAUREEN MC GOVERN,** who's currently in residence here, was once known (to her consternation) as "the disaster-theme queen"—she sang "The Morning After," from "The Poseidon Adventure," as well as songs from "Towering Inferno" and "Superman." Since then, Ms. McGovern, who has a powerful, versatile, four-octave voice, has made a name for herself as a cabaret singer. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Jean-Paul Bourelly at the Knitting Factory

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steakhouse, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Show times vary.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. **RALPH MOORE'S** quintet holds sway May 21-26, and saxophonist-flutist **JAMES MOODY,** who started out under the tutelage of Dizzy Gillespie in the forties, steps in on May 28, with his quartet. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the downstairs room, which is as big and plain as a mess hall, Mondays after nine are set aside for salsa bands. **OSCAR D'LEON'S** orchestra, **JOSÉ ALBERTO,** and **STEVE TURRE** share the stage on May 27. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Two flights up, at the Top of the Gate, the **MICROSCOPIC SEPTET** performs on May 23, and **ROY GERSON'S** group claims May 28. In the club's main room, **MARSHALL CRENSHAW,** who is coming out of hiding with a strong new album, titled "Life Is Too Short," performs on May 29. Show times vary.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. The barrelhouse pianist and comedienne **DOROTHY DONEGAN** leads a trio May 21-26, and **RED HOLLOWAY'S** quartet takes hold on May 28. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

TRUTH: There is nothing left to say about her. You've read it all already.

DARE: Write a fresh column about the American Foundation for AIDS Research's night with Madonna.

TRUTH: There are no quotes. You couldn't even get near her. If Heathrow had this much security, Europe could relax.

DARE: When friends who are unsatiated by the media blitz call from Boston, Miami, and Charlotte to find out at first hand how she looked, what she ate, what she said, and with whom she danced, tell them that the closest you got to her was when, at Laura Belle's prescreening party, one of her bodyguards asked you where he could take a whiz.

TRUTH: The post-screening V.I.P. section at Shelter (formerly Quick! and before that B^2, but best known as the space that will never be as much fun as it was when it was Area) was cordoned off behind a makeshift floor-to-ceiling plastic shower curtain, so that no air, let alone the kind that is conditioned, got through. Within a half hour, this bastion of exclusivity looked like the controversial opening scene of the new NBC series "Sisters." The guest of honor endured it just long enough for the right side of her pageboy to droop.

DARE: Answer this question: If everyone complained the next day that "the heat in there was unbearable," how could it have been a V.I.P. room?

TRUTH: When the scene in the movie featuring two men kissing appeared, the section of the balcony occupied exclusively by "suits" (as Madonna calls execs) buzzed about her assertion in *The Advocate* that every male "should have a man's tongue in his mouth at least once."

DARE: Find out who among them has a subscription.

TRUTH: The Laura Belle food was blecch, the film fascinating, the Shelter so-so, the energy higher than usual, the crowd too knowing and very familiar. The morning after, all boasted "What a great night!" to their less fortunate brethren.

DARE: Catch anyone saying ". . . for a Wednesday" under their breath. (And that's the truth.)

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY— PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL—Aerialists, clowns, jugglers, and contortionists *avec une différence.* (Battery Park City. Through June 2. For further information, call 509-5550.)

"THE FULL MOON SHOW"—A medley of performance works by Alien Comic, Jo Andres, Mimi Gocse, and the Sodomite Warriors, in a new space. (McGregor's Performance Bar, 15 St. Marks Pl. 674-1851. May 23-25 at 9.).

PEGGY SHAW AND LOIS WEAVER—In "Lesbians Who Kill," a fact-based performance drama. (Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Sq. S. May 25 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

LA MAMA—May 22-25 and May 29 at 7:30: Steven Berkoff's play "East." Through June 2. . . . ¶ May 23-25 at 10: Benito Gutmacher in "Business Business." Through June 1. (74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

DANCE THEATRE WORKSHOP—May 23-26 at 8: Ain Gordon presents his new theatre work, "Get in the Car." Through June 2. . . . ¶ May 24-25 at 11: Louise Smith in "The House of the Mighty Mother That Travels Across the Sky." (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

ART

LEON GOLUB, a painter of real stature, has long labored under the pressure of twin obsessions—with art history in its most heroic formal modes, and with political history in its most carnally virulent manifestations. This makes for volatile chemistry, impossible to maintain at a steady boil. Golub's first taste of personal glory came fairly early in his career, with a controversial 1959 MOMA exhibition called "New Images of Man." His passionate, primordially scruffy paintings of sphinxes, griffins, and other mythic monsters looked like the bastard heirs to Abstract Expressionism at a time when serious Oedipal "succession" battles were waged among artists and critics more often than they are today. Almost immediately, however, Golub himself was sideswiped. Frank Stella, for instance, burst onto the scene in another 1959 MOMA show, and the way was being readied for Pop, minimalism, and other sixties styles antithetical to Golub's way of thinking. He moved to Paris in 1959 and didn't return to New York until 1964.

Golub persevered, not exactly in obscurity, but without the requisite laurels of a born gladiator. (This native Chicagoan tends to talk about almost everything in football metaphors.) During the Vietnam War years and through the seventies he used documentary images—wire-service photos, Amnesty International press releases, etc.—as figurative sources in his paintings. Then, in 1982, Golub burst through again with a spectacular show of epic history paintings. These unforgettable, friezelike portraits of mercenaries at work and leisure—ambiguously sadistic scenes of torture and boozing that might ideally be acted by Robert Duvall and Willem Dafoe—had some of the formal grandeur of Pompeian frescoes and the rhetorical thrust of works by the French Revolutionary painter Jacques-Louis David. For Golub, then hitting sixty, it was triumph at last.

But triumph isn't built to last. "WorldWide," Golub's first three-dimensional installation, on view in the Brooklyn Museum's grand lobby (through June 16), is made up of details from his paintings that have been reproduced onto a sparse array of hanging plastic sheets. "For the first time," we are told, "the viewer can walk amid Golub's soldiers of fortune and their prey." This is carny nonsense, inimical to the artist's potent visions in paint. "WorldWide" is a half-minded project. Perhaps Golub is preoccupied with trying to get hold of images from the Gulf War.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Sculpture of Indonesia" includes more than a hundred and thirty-five bronzes, life-size stone sculptures, and ceremonial objects dating from the eighth century to the fifteenth. . . . ¶ A large exhibition of paintings, drawings, and etchings by Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863). Also on view is a previously unpublished sketchbook from Delacroix's 1828 trip to Touraine. Through June 16. . . . ¶ A show of illuminated pages and decorative designs from Islamic books produced in Iran, Turkey, and India from the fourteenth century through the nineteenth. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden, planted with nine sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—Designs for South American gardens and parks by the Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx. Starts May 23. . . . ¶ An installation of a huge blanket of stainless-steel hair, with one end suspended from the ceiling, by Kyoko Kumai, a Japanese fibre artist. Although the work is sophisticated in its use of materials, it's sculpturally uninteresting. Through June 18. . . . ¶ Fifty-five prints from the eighties by Johns, Hockney, Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein, Dine, Rosenquist, and Stella. . . . ¶ "Mean Streets" is a show of street photographs from the forties through the eighties by such artists as Lisette Model, Garry Winogrand, and Todd Webb. Through July 16. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The Biennial: work by artists whose stars began to rise in the fifties and sixties is on the second floor; work by artists who emerged in the seventies and eighties is on the third floor; and work by late-eighties and nineties artists is on the fourth floor. The "AIDS Timeline," by Group Material, is in the lobby. Through June 16. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—Leon Golub's first three-dimensional installation, titled "WorldWide." Through June 16. . . . ¶ A display of Impressionist paintings and works on paper, titled "Monet and His Contemporaries." Included are five works by Monet, and others by Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, van Gogh, and Picasso. Through June 2. . . . ¶ Forty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fishhooks, three monumental carved-wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm, raffia, and bamboo. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—An exhibition that examines the ecosystems of tropical rain forests around the world, such as those in the Congo basin, the Amazon basin, Madagascar, and Borneo. (Open Mondays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8:45.)

AMERICAN ACADEMY AND INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND LETTERS, Broadway at 155th St.—The academy's annual exhibition of works by newly elected artists, including Robert Arneson, Jane Wilson, William T. Wiley, and Shirley Smith. Through June 9. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"The Story of a Painting: A Korean Buddhist Treasure from the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation." This scholar's dream show takes a single work of art and casts about in several different historical directions at once. Although the painting under examination, known as the "Burke triad," is faded and hardly a crowd pleaser, it's an important work in the history of Korean art, a field in which interest and knowledge are rapidly expanding. When the Japanese invaded Korea in 1592, they destroyed or pillaged pretty much all of the local culture, and the "Burke triad," which depicts the Buddha and two attendant bodhisattvas, is a rare example of pre-invasion Buddhist art. The show also provides a mini-history of the triad form, a view of Korean Buddhist monastic life, and a sampling of later Korean painting, much of which has a marvellous flattened "Netherlandish" space. It's a tightly packed display, fascinating and at times confusing. On the whole it offers a somewhat loopy view, mostly due to the breadth of the subjects and the smallness of the exhibition. But there are several rich works to savor. Through July 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, 1040 Grand Con-

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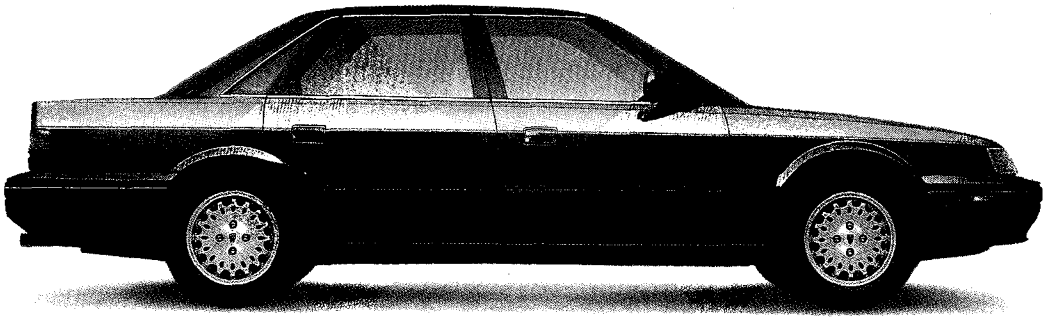

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course—"The Nearest Edge of the World," an exhibition of works in several mediums by nine contemporary artists from Cuba. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—Forty-one examples of ancient Chinese bronze vessels, weapons, and personal ornaments ranging from the nineteenth century B.C. (the beginning of the Erlitou era) to the third century A.D. (the end of the Han dynasty). Through June 15. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—The museum's collection—begun in 1896 by the three Hewitt sisters, Amy, Eleanor, and Sarah—is ably represented by "A Design Resource," a show of seven hundred objects. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"From Pontormo to Seurat," a show of sixty-one drawings from the Art Institute of Chicago, including works by Gainsborough, Géricault, Redon, Delacroix, and Degas. Through July 7. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Painting a Place in America" gathers the work of fifty Jewish-American painters and sculptors working in New York between 1900 and 1945. Among the artists represented are Adolph Gottlieb, Louise Nevelson, Chaim Gross, Mark Rothko, and Max Weber. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 3.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Mozart: Prodigy of Nature." A comprehensive exhibition of all things Mozart. There are more than fifty manuscripts, including four pieces composed at age five and a first draft of the Requiem; early letters home from his first trip to Italy (December, 1769) and his last letter to his father (April, 1787); and his "Verzeichnüss aller meiner Werke" ("Catalogue of All My Works"), which he kept for the last seven years of his life. . . . ¶ Eighteenth-century drawings by the Venetian masters Tiepolo, Guardi, and Canaletto. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—In "Illustrating Nature: The Art of Botany," the New York Botanical Garden's collection of art is represented by ninety-five watercolors, pen-and-ink drawings, books, and dried plant specimens. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Africa Explores: Twentieth-Century African Art" presents more than a hundred art works in various mediums. The works are divided into five categories: "Traditional," "New Functional," "Urban," "International," and "Extinct." The Center for African Art has organized the exhibition, and it runs simultaneously in their galleries, at 54 E. 68th St. (Open daily except Mondays; opens Sundays at noon.). . . ¶ In a show called "Embodying Faith," five contemporary artists tackle the theme of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual in Christianity. . . . ¶ In the museum's Broadway windows is an installation by the Catalan artist Perejaume, titled "Pintura i Representacío," that consists of two visitor-accessible rows of theatre seats. . . . ¶ "Eclipse of the Earth," an installation by Kazuo Katase. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—Fifty paintings, drawings, photographs, and decorative objects that were collected by Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919). . . . ¶ "Justice Rendered" is a show of forty documents and art works related to the three-hundred-year history of the New York Supreme Court. Through July 7. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Kingdoms of Land, Sea, and Sky" includes a hundred and eighty zoological woodcuts, engravings, and watercolors by artists and naturalists such as Albrecht Dürer, John James Audubon, Edward Lear, and Maria Sibylla Merian. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ Sixty-three prints by Reginald Marsh (1898-1954), depicting New York scenes from the twenties and thirties. Through June 29. (Third Floor Gallery. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Road, Long Island City—Noguchi (1904-88), one of the twentieth century's singular talents, designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his sculptures. It contains a wide range of his work—from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures to several types of stone carvings—and documentation of his prodigious public art. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful, ivy-walled garden dotted with the artist's works. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A retrospective of works by Romare Bearden (1912-88), which includes a hundred and forty-one oils, collages, and watercolors. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

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WILD LIFE

Felicia Young, a festival artist who believes that gardens should be anything but secret, is organizing a pageant, called "Rites of Spring," to celebrate forty-one gardens that have been cultivated on vacant lots by residents of the Lower East Side. These gardens have been blossoming for years, most recently under the aegis of the city, but now they're threatened by various building plans. The pageant will include such works by neighborhood artists as "Esmerelda" (a fifteen-foot-tall water spirit wearing Mylar and blue tulle); and appearances by the Empire Loisaida Samba School ("Loisaida" is a local pronunciation of Lower East Side) and by people decorated with sprouts.

The pageant will move among the gardens, which are located between 14th Street and Houston, from the Bowery to Avenue D, all day May 26 (starting at 11 A.M. at Houston and the Bowery). Along the way, paraders will stop for readings, a dramatization of the death of a Bureaucrat Beast, and tea. Several people clad in mud and little else will beat sticks and perhaps experience something primordial. Conch players will provide accompaniment—something like the sound of an irritable elephant. The event is likely to please everyone who, like Ms. Young, is inspired by the pageantry of the French Revolution, and everyone who wished Earth Day would never end. Ms. Young and her troops have strong feelings in favor of participatory art and against art as a commodity. (Ms. Young talks about her former job at Christie's in the way that other people discuss their memories of war.) Not surprisingly, her festival art, which she developed in Italy and India, and perfected in Brooklyn, has always been on the earnest side of good causes. But, Ms. Young said, to add a purely comic note to the festival "some of the performers will wear prom dresses." All those who wish to make banners, carry things, or act as a garden spirit (don some twigs, say, or donate cash) shouldn't hesitate to call her at 431-1399.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Katie Lee—"An overpowering oneness with nature enveloped me while I sat alone on a tiny sandspit in the middle of the Pacific Ocean," the artist wrote in a journal from her trip to the Galápagos Islands last summer. "How was I, a human, going to come close to getting all that wonder on paper?" Lee, who teaches botanical illustration at the New York Botanical Garden, has approached that goal in this show, which includes thirty-five works depicting Galápagos creatures in pen-and-ink, colored pencil, and gouache. The showstopper—among huddling sea lions, blue-footed boobies, a regal hawk, and a smiling iguana—is a Pinzon Island giant tortoise, caught in the middle of a yawn. (Ten per cent of this show's sales will go to a fund established to preserve the tortoises on Pinzon Island.) Through May 31. (Ursus Books and Prints, 981 Madison Ave., at 77th St. Open Mondays.)

Joe Zucker—Twelve new paintings, all made of wood, acrylic, sash cord, and pigment. Zucker has the patience of a Penelope and the wacky idealism of a Don Quixote. Subjects, whether prizefighters, pirates, golems, or, in this case, cactus plants, mean a lot to him—among other things, they keep his mind busy as he puts himself through his often laborious processes—but they may be barely evident at first glance. These new works are especially luminous, with their albumen whites, and with faint, sappy yellow and green coils of paint clinging to their sharply angled, nautical grids. Perhaps surprisingly, they bring to mind work by Robert Ryman, as well as handiwork by an ideal old salt. Through May 28. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Open Mondays.)

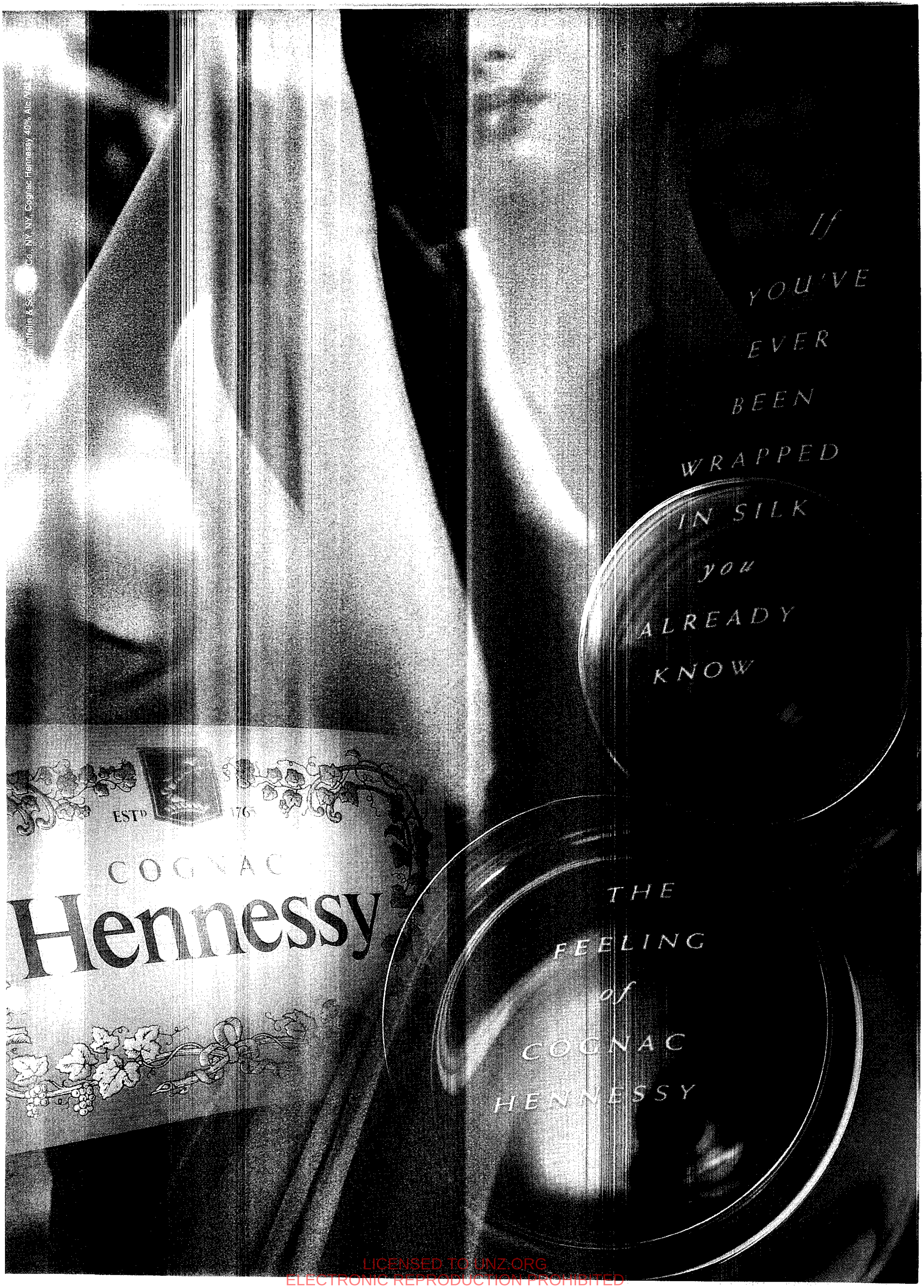
Short List—**VARUJAN BOGHOSIAN,** Bernard, 33 E. 74th St. (through May 26); **JEAN DUBUFFET,** Elkon, 18 E. 81st St. (through June 8); **SAM FRANCIS,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through June 29); **BRICE MARDEN,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through June 28); **ROBERT MOTHERWELL,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through June 28); **KENNETH NOLAND,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays, through June 29); **HELEN SAWYER,** Marbella, 28 E. 72nd St. (through May 25); **FRITZ SCHOLDER,** Alexander, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through June 22).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Nicholas Africano—Although this artist was reared in the Midwest, his sensibility is pure Italian. Several of these deeply Romantic paintings have a Daphne-esque dimension, portraying women partially transformed into trees. And a life-size sculpture of a woman with a marble body, a glass head, and wood arms is breathtaking; it has the pathos of opera. Through May 25. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Charles Burchfield (1893-1967) and **John Marin** (1870-1953)—A show that is ostensibly about trees. Both artists had a magical relationship to landscape, but in very different ways. Marin veered toward the abstract—he portrays a nervous and intensely personalized version of Feininger's post-Cubist space—and his work tends to suffer from redundancy. Not so with Burchfield. He is well known for his bleak street scenes of Buffalo and Ohio, a few of which are on display here, but his landscapes are the best works in the show. Some are inhabited by spirits, with trees drooping in a vaguely ghoulish way from the weight of winter snow; others are simply loaded with anxiety. Through May 25. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

George Condo—Recent paintings by a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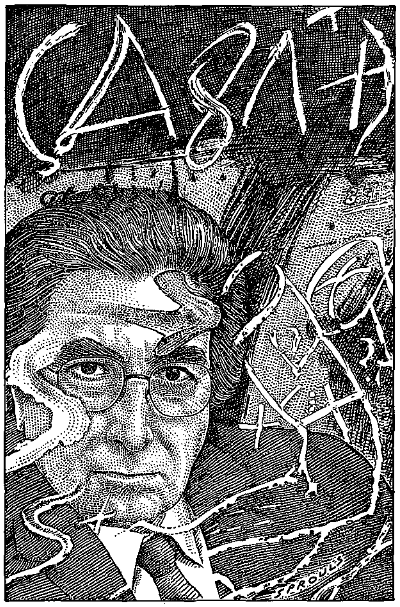
ART—Cont'd

profligately talented artist, who lives in Paris. He may have been influenced by the local tradition of *cuisine ménagère*: some of these paintings look as if they had been assembled with leftover bits of canvas and scraps from discarded works. The results are predictably uneven, but there are a couple of satisfying charmers—a huge and almost empty painting, for instance, with just a fizz of blue on white and a tiny corner landscape; and a marvellous picture of a serious young girl that evokes mid-century "psychoanalytic" portraiture by Picasso, Miró, Gorky, de Kooning, and John Graham, among others. Through May 24. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

"The Book as Art: 1960 to Now"—Some of the most engaging art works of the past thirty years have been made with the intention of breaking down the boundaries between art and life, and many of these works are in the form of inexpensive artists' books. Franklin Furnace, the nation's foremost museum of such material, has organized a small, cogent primer in artists' books, on display in the HarperCollins lobby (10 E. 53rd St.). The list of the exhibition's contents reads like the Top Forty of artists' books, and includes Claes Oldenburg's "Ray Gun Comics," Ed Ruscha's accordion-folded "Every Building on the Sunset Strip," Bruce Nauman's photographic "L.A. Air," Lawrence Weiner's "Statements," and key books by Dieter Roth, George Maciunas, John Baldessari, Michael Snow, and Ida Applebroog. There is an edition of *SMS*, a magazine published by the Surrealist painter and collector William N. Copley, and Gilbert and George's "To Be with Art Is All We Ask." Of more recent vintage are Suzanne Lacy's "Rape Is" and Jenny Holzer's "Truisms and Essays." All of these works are among the most significant produced in any medium by the artists. Through May 28. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 5.)

Group Show—Maura Sheehan, Kim Jones, and Brett De Palma are not, in common parlance, "uptown artists," which is why it's fun to see their work at the normally proper Herstand gallery. Sheehan is known for madcap installations of a tinselly charm, on themes involving geopolitics and the magic of ritual. "Trade Winds," her piece here, is an enticingly summery work that includes jalousies sporting scenic painting, an electric fan decked out in boating flags, piles of white and brown sugar connoting the North and the South, and a map on which Latin America looms especially large. Jones' installation is recognizable at once by its clusters of sticks suggesting bursts of shrapnel and by its all-over device of splattered mud—a bit as if Richard Long had gone to combat instead of on country walks. Here, however, Jones' familiar working style assumes an air of remote formality. It is De Palma who gains most from the trappings of refinement. Not an installation artist at all, he deploys an arsenal of styles ranging from Cubism to psychedelia, and his paintings, however polished their frames, and for all their domestication, are really wild at heart—a lot wilder, in fact, than Fauve art. Through June 15. (24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)



Antoni Tàpies

Short List—**ENRICO BAJ,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 15); **NORMAN BLUHM,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 31); **JEANNE DUVAL,** French, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 25); **WILLIAM GLACKENS,** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through June 8); **GARY KUEHN,** Drake, 50 W. 57th St. (through June 8); **WALT KUHN** and **HUGH STEERS,** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through May 31); **ARNALDO ROCHE RABELL,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through June 4); **HUBERT SCHEIBEL,** Tilton, 24 W. 57th St. (through June 1); **HOLLY SEARS** and **BRUCE COHEN,** Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St. (through June 1); **GEORGE SEGAL,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 8); **ANTONI TÀPIES,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through May 25); **MICHAEL TETHEROW,** Jason McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 1); **ANNE TRUITT** (through June 28) and **PIERRE ALECHINSKY** (through May 31), both at André Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.

GALLERIES—SoHo

Christian Eckart—Recent paintings that consist of four vertical stripes of different colors, surrounded by broad, shiny aluminum frames. The surfaces are luscious, like baked enamel, and the colors are juxtaposed in such a way that each looks great (paint chips should be presented this thoughtfully), but the over-all effect is completely uninteresting. Through May 25. (Rubin-Spangle, 395 West Broadway.)

Anne and Patrick Poirier

Félix Gonzáles-Torres—One of the strongest artists in the current Whitney Biennial, González-Torres examines issues of loss, mourning, cleansing, and regeneration in a most heartfelt way. This gallery exhibition has been changing each week during its monthlong run. The first installation was a series of closeup black-and-white photographs of a memorial nature: images of carved walls outside the American Museum of Natural History that list the ostensible attributes of Theodore Roosevelt—patriot, historian, ranchman, scientist, etc. The second installation consisted of a go-go stage and several performances. The third and present one includes a series of white paintings entitled "Blood Works," and the fourth will consist of a carpet of silver-wrapped candies on the floor and phrases about personal loss on the walls. Through June 1. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

James Hyde—Although this artist has some interesting tricks up his sleeve, too often they remain little more than clever sleights of hand. Several of these multi-panel works consist of lovely frescoes—including one of horizontal stripes, another of a delicate field of mottled deep green and fuchsia—that he has intruded upon with non-art materials, such as a bag of water or a heavy steel frame. In another painting a bar of concrete and a bar of cast glass are perched on a steel beam, perilously close to the edge. While these pieces are lively parables of painting, they sometimes veer too close to a contorted Constructivism. Through June 8. (Good, 532 Broadway.)

Alfred Leslie—Large charcoal drawings of a nude female model. Leslie uses a high-contrast, Caravaggioesque light and positions his model in odd reclining poses that he then undermines by reorienting the drawings so that the model appears "righted." The effect is disorienting. So is the contrast between the deliberately manipulated poses and the woman's facial expressions, which are calm and self-commanding. The artist is a master of his medium, proving that realism is not necessarily *retardataire*, just excessively abused. Through June 29. (Flynn, 113 Crosby St.)

Sherrie Levine—For some time now, Levine has been taking on the conceptual giant of the twentieth century, Marcel Duchamp. She appropriates that master appropriator's forms, and neutralizes and reforms them through feminist discourse. She began with paintings of chessboards, continued with elegant glass sculptures of Duchamp's "Malic Molds," and continues further in this dramatic, intelligent, and beautiful show. The first room has been transformed into an artifactual display of a rarefied men's club, with four identical billiard tables lifted from a painting by Man Ray. A second room contains more specifically Duchampian works: a series of highly polished, identical bronze urinals, somewhat like Brancusis but also like baby shoes. Beyond that is a group of six monochrome oil paintings, each in a different Yves Klein color and called "Meltdowns." All the works here are, in a sense, meltdowns of art works—exquisitely crafted markers that titillate the desire for good painting and sculpture while also subverting it. Through June 29. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Matt Mullican—Since the mid-seventies, Mullican has been attempting to give visual form and structure to a corpus of information from, broadly speaking, everyday life—no simple task. He has sometimes been misperceived as simply an eccentric visionary, which is only part of the story. The current exhibition brings other qualities to the fore, in particular the artist's respect for the absurd. The show consists of two opposing installations, one a grid of magnesium-plate reliefs, the other a series of black oil-stick rubbings on paper. The groupings represent half of a project made up of all the illustration plates from a nineteenth-century encyclopedia. Also on view are some very handsome rubbings on canvas. Through June 1. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

Lowell Nesbitt—A not uninteresting show of homoerotic drawings and several paintings spanning three decades in the career of this generally shallow society painter. The best works are those from the early sixties; after that, it's all downhill. Through June 1. (Wessel O'Connor, 580 Broadway.)

Richard Pettibone—This artist made a name for himself in the early sixties as one of the first practitioners of the art of the copy; interest in his work was revived in the mid-eighties. As a reminder of his earlier work, a gorgeous wall of miniature Frank Stella-style black pinstripe paintings is included here. But the main attraction is a series of paintings and Shaker benches of a somewhat more "original" nature, which have quotes from Ezra Pound either carved into or painted on them. Pettibone seems to take his Pound worship seriously; one painting reads, "Attention Serious Artists, Read The Serious Artist by Ezra Pound, Literary Essays, PP. 41-57, I'm Serious." The works are magnificently crafted, particularly the benches, but they suffer from a cloying Romanticism. No longer a clever copyist, Pettibone seems to have been born again, melding his own being and Pound's with the zeal of a recovering appropriationist. Through June 1. (Marcus, 568 Broadway. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

Ann Preston—This Biblical-scene installation, titled "Expulsion," recalls an ancient bath or burial chamber. It consists of a series of friezes in shallow relief that seem to offer a female counterpoint to the works of Tom Otterness. Like his friezes, Preston's are full of nimble doughboys and girls whose bodies often look like cartoonish sperm. The piece begins with a tree of breastlike olives and ends with a conga line enacting primitivistic rituals of aggression. Through June 1. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Alan Turner—If anyone can be said to be carrying the late-Guston torch, it is Turner, with his paintings of body fragments combined in surreal ways. (His works also have a certain similarity, if only a formal one, to recent Johnses.) In one work, a segment of skin is pierced by a stylized safety pin with a tiny trumpet mouthpiece at its end. It is unclear what is revealed by the artist's tortured self-examination. Through May 25. (Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

Thomas Woodruff—A show that includes nine oval paintings of a Gilles-like clown, which are executed in an Old Master style but are about as close to Keane's wide-eyed dime-store portraits as enlightened painting gets. Each work shows the clown in a different costume and with different makeup, and each has mournful tears somewhere in it—under the clown's eyes, in the air, pinned to his costume. Through May 25. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

"Reclaiming the Spirit"—A carefully considered exhibition of twentieth-century painting from south of the border. With the exception of two Diego Riveras—a Cubist landscape and a peasant grouping—all the works have a surrealistic edge. A continuum is quite convincingly traced from historic works by Wifredo Lam and Joaquín Torres-García to contemporary paintings. Many of the contemporary works—Ray Smith's penetrating mythical narratives, Guillermo Kuitca's skull rising from the mist of a Scandinavian map, Julio Galán's marvellous collage of cut-up religious posters—translate the Magic Realism of Central and South American literature into striking visual terms. Through May 25. (Baghoomian, 555 Broadway.)

Group Shows—At **GUIDARTE,** 379 West Broadway: An exhibition of drawings by nineteen women, including Louise Bourgeois, Jane Kaplowitz, Judy Pfaff, Kiki Smith, Joan Jonas, Joan Mitchell, Ellen Phelan, Elyn Zimmerman, Susan Rothenberg, and Elizabeth Murray. No theme has been declared here, and yet all of these works suggest certain shared characteristics: an offhand, whimsical, or humorous approach, and an idiom at once figurative and abstract. It's a surprisingly coherent and pleasant show. Through May 30. . . . **SHAFRAZI,** 130 Prince St.: Although a number of the artists in this show are fairly well known, it has the feel of an old-fashioned new-talent show. All of the work is very aestheticized, some of it yawningly so, such as Lawrence Carroll's "Two Beds for Rauschenberg," which looks like a pair of battered mattresses and is nothing more than coattail opportunism. But there is also some strong painting, especially that of Stephen Ellis, David Row, and Nicholas Rule; Charles Clough's giant spin-art canvas, for example, is energetic and intelligent. Few galleries mount this kind of invitational group show anymore, and that's a shame. Through June 8. . . . **WEBER,** 142 Greene St.: Large-scale sculptures by gallery artists, including Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, and Sol LeWitt. The most resonant work, a Smithson corner piece consisting of a mirror and a mound of rock salt, is both a straightforward and a mystifying examination of presence and absence. Through May 25.

Short List—**BEVERLY BUCHANAN,** Steinbaum, 132 Greene St. (through June 11); **KATHE BURKHART,** Feature, 484 Broome St. (through June 1); **CHRYSSA,** Karg, 100 Greene St. (through May 31); **SAM GILLIAM,** Fendrick, 568 Broadway, entrance on Prince St. (through May 25); **JANE HAMMOND,** Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through June 8); **FRANCES HYNES,** Kelly, 591 Broadway (through June 8); **ROBERT LOBE,** Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St. (through June 8); **DEBORAH OROPALLO,** Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through June 1); **MIMMO PALADINO,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through June 10); **HENRY PEARSON,** Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through June 1); **ANNE AND PATRICK POIRIER,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through May 25); **ED RUSCHA,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through June 1); **SEAN SCHERER,** Stux, 155 Spring St. (through June 1); **RANDALL SCHMIT,** Donahue, 560 Broadway (through June 8); **PETER SCHUYFF,** Kasmin, 580 Broadway (through June 29); **WILLIAM T. WILEY,** Max Protetch, 560 Broadway (through June 1).

OTHER GALLERIES

Shigeko Kubota—A retrospective of video sculptures and concrete poems. The atmosphere pervading the two floors here—one lit low, the other brightly—suggests a metaphysical World's Fair. Among the many highlights are "Adam and Eve"—an astral pair revolving at different speeds, with wood limbs and monitor guts—and the blue-mirrored "Video Byobu III (Birds)," in which psychedelic avian patterns flicker across sixteen monitors. Through Sept. 15. (Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 12 to 4; Saturdays and Sundays, 12 to 6.)

"Kulcher Queen and Kulcher Books"—An exhibition of more than forty books and magazines that Lita Hornick published through the Kulcher Press, including "Screen Tests," by Gerard Malanga and Andy Warhol, and "Interlocking Lives," by Alex Katz and Kenneth Koch. Through June 28. (Butler Library, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Open Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 4:45.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

TWO modernist exhibitions—one of El Lissitzky's work, the other of Edward Quigley's—can be seen at Houk Friedman, a new photography gallery at 1094 Madison Avenue (at 82nd St.; through June 1). The Quigley show, of pictures mostly from the thirties, offers a welcome chance to look at much of the photographer's work, but it's of interest more from a connoisseur's standpoint than as a display of something visionary. This is not so with the smaller group of images by El Lissitzky. Although we expected to find more consistent dynamism in a body of work by this protagonist of the Russian avant-garde, his spirit of experimentation was there at every turn. So, once in a while, were his fellow-artists—the show includes portraits of Schwitters and Arp. We've got so used to the art and jazzy graphics inspired by El Lissitzky that the original works take a while to reveal their power. For a start, they're more than modest in scale. But they stand up to the El Lissitzky legacy and are fascinating fragments of that extraordinarily energetic period for art, the twenties. The photos exemplify El Lissitzky's use of different creative forms—such as architecture, portraiture, print, collage, and photomontage.

"Mean Streets"—A small show of American street photography since the nineteen-forties. There are well-known works that exemplify street photography—images by Lisette Model, Robert Frank, Garry Winogrand, and Walker Evans—but there are also wonderful shots by lesser-known photographers. All of the pictures have a cinematic quality, and a gritty dynamic. Leon Levenstein's 1969 photograph of a man on Fifth Avenue is a powerful, growly portrait, and Todd Webb's long horizontal panel capturing a block on Sixth Avenue in 1948 is a fantastic display of street signs and street action. Through July 16. (Museum of Modern Art.)

Short List—**ALEXANDRA EDWARDS,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through June 8); **DENNIS FARBER,** Stux, 155 Spring St. (through June 1); **SALLY GALL,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (through June 15); **CRAIGIE HORSFIELD,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through June 21); **EIKOH HOSOE,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; through May 26); **LARRY JOHNSON,** 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. (through May 25); **EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE** and **DAVID LEVINTHAL,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through May 25); **SEBASTIÃO SALGADO,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through June 11); **CHRIS STEELE-PERKINS,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. (through May 25).

MUSIC

ZUBIN MEHTA is to conclude his tenure as music director of the New York Philharmonic with performances of Arnold Schoenberg's "Gurrelieder," a large-scale, orchestrally complex, thickly scored, overtly and emphatically expressive late-Romantic work. (The eminent bass-baritone Hans Hotter will provide the narration; vocal soloists include Florence Quivar and Gary Lakes.) This is precisely the kind of music Mr. Mehta has always done best. The trouble is that we have the feeling we know more or less how the performances are going to sound before we hear them—in a word, we prejudge them. Prejudice is unadmirable, though anyone's decision about what to go to hear and what to miss is to some extent an expression of it. "Gurrelieder" has exquisite subtleties and deep feeling, and complexities intellectual as well as musical, but the one-sided description above embodies our prejudice about Mr. Mehta's work—our expectation of the qualities he might be attracted to or might bring out in performance. Sad to say, our principal impression of his long tenure has to do with rather heartless, sweaty, overloud performances of big symphonic works, in which the virtues of energy, control of momentum, and large-scale rhythmic organization are relied upon—almost exclusively—to communicate the content of the music. We can think of exceptions, but our thoughts turn more happily to the brio and dash, the luxuriant colors, the fine concentration, of certain Mehta records we know from pre-Philharmonic days. For whatever combination of reasons, Mehta and the Philharmonic have not been an artistically satisfying match. In his future projects as a world-roving guest conductor (he has a long and interesting list of engagements, including a "Ring" cycle at Lyric Opera of Chicago) we wish him the speedy renewal of his best qualities, and we will attend "Gurrelieder" looking for a foretaste.

With the New York Philharmonic, Hans Hotter

MUSIC—Cont'd

(The box-office number for Avery Fisher Hall is 874-2424; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—In the final concerts of his thirteen-year tenure as the orchestra's music director, Zubin Mehta conducts Schoenberg's "Gurrelieder." With soprano Susan Dunn, *mezzo-soprano* Florence Quivar, tenors Jon Garrison and Gary Lakes, bass John Cheek, narrator Hans Hotter, and the New York Choral Artists. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 23-24 and May 28 at 8.)

New York Pops—Skitch Henderson conducts light concert favorites in a program that includes guest appearances by the singers Roberta Peters and Stephen Lehew, the Coasters, Rockapella, Jackie Mason, and Walter Cronkite. (Carnegie Hall. May 20 at 7:30.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducts orchestral and sacred works by Vivaldi; with soloists and the Metropolitan Singers/Greek Choral Society. (Alice Tully Hall. May 22 at 8.)

InterSchool Orchestras—Paul Strasser conducts the pick of the crop of the city's up-and-coming generation of instrumentalists in a concert that includes a new work by Peter Schickele. Tenor Paul Sperry is featured in operetta excerpts by Kálmán and Lehár. (Alice Tully Hall. May 23 at 8.)

New England Symphonic Ensemble—John Rutter conducts the orchestra and a chorus in his Requiem, Magnificat, and Te Deum. (Carnegie Hall. May 25 at 8.)

Manhattan Philharmonic—At Carnegie Hall. May 26 at 2: Winifred Baker directs the orchestra and a chorus in the New York première of Schnittke's Requiem, and Marvin Burke directs Fauré's Requiem. . . . ¶ May 26 at 8: Peter Tiboris conducts the orchestra, soloists, and a large ensemble of visiting choristers in Verdi's Requiem, in a new edition that incorporates material—including a choral fugue—that has not been performed since the work premièred, in 1874. Also on the program is Kodály's "Psalmus Hungaricus," directed by Miklos Takács. . . . ¶ May 27 at 8: Peter Tiboris conducts the American première of Sergei Taneyev's First Symphony, as well as Mozart's Requiem and the Coronation Scene from Mussorgsky's "Boris Godunov," featuring bass Stefan Szkafarowsky.

Mannes Camerata—Paul C. Echols conducts sixteen singers and a period-instrument orchestra in stagings of two musical-theatre works from the early seventeenth century: Marco da Gagliano's "La Dafne" (1608) and Monteverdi's "Tirsi e Clori" (1615)—the latter to be presented as a choreographed *intermedio* separating the two halves of "La Dafne." (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 580-0210. May 20-21 at 8.)

Dessoff Choirs—Amy Kaiser directs sacred works by J. C. Bach and Mozart, as well as the latter's concert aria "Non so d'onde viene," K. 294, written in 1778 for the composer's future sister-in-law and reworked five years later to incorporate elaborate ornamentation. With soprano Erie Mills and the Levin Eighteenth-Century Ensemble. (Alice Tully Hall. May 21 at 8.)

New Amsterdam Singers—Clara Longstreth directs a program that ranges from Tallis's "Lamentations of Jeremiah" and Renaissance motets to Daniel Pinkham's comic cantata "The Saints Preserve Us!" (Merkin Concert Hall. May 22 at 8.)

RECITALS

Patricia Spencer—The flutist samples recent unaccompanied repertoire composed for her instrument, much of it expanded through the deployment of electronics. The program comprises works by Libby Larsen, Salvatore Martirano, Judith Shatin, Arthur Kreiger, and Karlheinz Stockhausen. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. May 20 at 8.)

Bob Telson—A showcase of works by the composer of dance, theatre, and film scores. (Alice Tully Hall. May 20 at 8.)

Ecco Trio—The violin-cello-piano trio performs Tchaikovsky's A-Minor Trio; a new work by the Taiwanese composer Ying Kwang-I; and the Larghetto and Scherzo, Op. 32, written in the mid-eighteen-seventies by Harvard's first music professor, John Knowles Paine. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 21 at 8.)

Bill Cosby

Friends and Enemies of New Music—Presenting excerpts from a new opera about surrogate motherhood (with music by Nancy Gunn and a libretto by Thalia Field), as well as recent chamber compositions by David Olan, Marti Epstein, and others. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. May 21 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-4814.)

Bargemusic—A string trio plays music by Mozart and Schubert, and clarinettist David Shifrin joins the group for a work by Ingolf Dahl. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 23 at 7:30 and May 26 at 4.)

Sachiko Hasegawa—The pianist performs works by Domenico Scarlatti, Schumann, Liszt, Bartók, and Takemitsu. (Yamaha Communication Center Showroom, 142 W. 57th St. May 24 at 1:15. No tickets necessary. . . . ¶ Merkin Concert Hall. May 29 at 8.)

Robert Mann and Stephen Hough—The violinist (a charter member of the Juilliard String Quartet) and the British pianist perform Brahms' three sonatas. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 25 at 8.)

Nohema Fernández—Pianist, performing works by American composers, both native-born (Gershwin, Bernstein, Lou Harrison, and others) and immigrants from Hispanic countries (Tania León and Juan Orrego-Salas). The afternoon will include a forum in which several of the composers consider ways in which ethnic influences have affected their musical vocabularies. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 26 at 3.)

Allison Brewster—The pianist, who has often appeared in this city in chamber-music groups and as a "collaborative artist," performs solo works by Clementi, Liszt, Ravel, and Corigliano in her New York recital début. Eugene Moye joins her for Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata, and tenor Robert White is featured in songs by Amy Beach, George Whitefield Chadwick, Horatio Parker, and Charles Ives. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 28 at 8.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Players from the orchestra perform Mozart's C-Minor String Quintet and Quintet in E-Flat for Piano and Winds. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. May 29 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

William Matthews—Classical guitarist, presenting a twentieth-century program that includes works written for him by Sebastian Currier and Frederic Hand. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. May 29 at 8.)

John Kamitsuka—Piano, performing works by Bach, Beethoven, (his Sonata, Op. 10, No. 2), Liszt, and Rachmaninoff, as well as the première of a work by Miriam Gideon. (Alice Tully Hall. May 29 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Bill Cosby—In benefit performances for Harlem Hospital. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 749-5838. May 20-22 at 7:30 and 10.)

Thomas Buckner—Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. May 23 at 8.

Eitetsu Hayashi—Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. May 24 at 8.

Illinois Jacquet Big Band—A concert sponsored by the New York Swing Dance Society. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. May 25 at 9. For information about tickets, call 696-9737.)

Ruth Brown—With the Dayton Selby trio, and Irwin C. Watson. (Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. May 26 at 3.)

Semaphore Ensemble—Alternative Museum, 17 White St. 966-4444. May 26 at 8.

"Positively Porter!"—A salute to Cole, with Richard Rodney Bennett, Barbara Lea, Dick Sudhalter, Marlene VerPlanck, and others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-2200. May 28 at 8.)

Bang on a Can Festival—A fully staged production of "The Wayward," a musical-theatre piece by Harry Partch. Newband performs on instruments that the late Mr. Partch created. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. May 22-26 at 8:30.) . . . ¶ "Van Gogh Video Opera," a collaborative work by the composer Michael Gordon and the video artist Elliot Caplan. (CSC Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. May 28-29 and June 3-4 at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Chicago Cubs, May 21-23 at 7:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the St. Louis Cardinals, May 24 at 7:40, and May 25-26 at 1:40.

Yankees—Vs. the Boston Red Sox, May 27 at 1, and May 28-29 at 7:30.

(The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499, and the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

Autos—The Indianapolis 500 will take place on May 26 at 11. Tune in to ABC for the exhaust-ing details.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Memorial Day Weekend—Summertime, and the . . . well, you know how the song goes. The people at the South Street Seaport are kicking it off with a three-day-long party (May 25-27) that includes an exhibition of wooden boats (kayaks, canoes, skiffs); outdoor concerts by New Orleans-style bands; and fireworks, on May 26 at 9:30. For a more complete schedule of events, call 669-9400.

Lectures, May 23—At 6: John Richardson, author of "A Life of Picasso," talks about his favorite subject. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160.) . . . ¶ At 7:30: James Watson, the so-called father of DNA, talks about his research. (American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. For information about tickets, call 769-5606.) . . . ¶ At 8:15: David Gilmore talks about being macho. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.)

Readings—May 22 at 8: George Plimpton, Dave Barry, Jamaica Kincaid, and Calvin Trillin in an evening of readings to benefit the East Harlem Tutorial Program; Ashford & Simpson will provide the musical entertainment. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.) . . . ¶ May 24 at 8: Raúl Barrientos and Alex Idavoy read from their own poetry. (Ceres Gallery, 91 Franklin St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ May 28 at 7: Sissela Bok reads from her own prose. (Brentano's bookstore, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 29 at 7: Josephine Humphreys reads from "The Fireman's Fair." (Brentano's bookstore, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.)

Walks—May 24: Over the Brooklyn Bridge, in honor of its hundred-and-eighth birthday. Sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring; for meeting place and reservations, call 265-2663. . . . ¶ May 25-26: Walk with the Urban Park Rangers from Bowling Green to the Morris-Jumel Mansion and then to the Dyckman house. (This is a two-day expedition, but does not include an overnight stay.) For more information, call 427-4040.

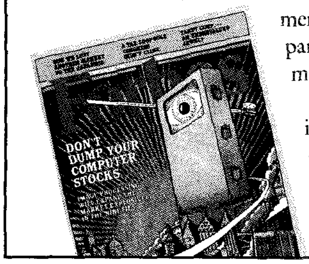
Memoranda—The tenth annual Turkish-American Day parade is on May 25, starting at noon, at Madison Ave. and 56th St. . . . ¶ The Washington Square Outdoor Art Show, an annual Greenwich Village event, will take place May 25-27 and June 1-2.

Without a computer, finding the two that match could be murder.

Just ask the detectives who spent three years looking for the killer of a New Jersey prosecutor. All they had to go on was a fingerprint left at the crime scene. But with a million prints in police files, how could they make a match?

Only with the help of a computer. One that did what computers of a few years ago couldn't do: Compare millions of images for similarity. The computer nailed the murderer.

Police work isn't the only line of work that can benefit from the harnessing of computers to images. As Forbes pointed out in its November 26th cover story, oceanographers used this computer imaging technology to turn a warehouseful of data into a couple of file cabinets. One law firm used it to scan 325,000 pages of documents—a search that would have kept 100 paralegals busy day and night for four months.



The applications for computer imaging systems are so dazzling that one day nearly every office worker could be connected to or near one. What all this means to a sluggish computer industry is growth. The kind of growth that will propel it into the year 2000, and beyond. The Forbes article contradicts Wall Street's conclusion that computers are just another cyclical capital goods industry.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 22.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Poison" (directed by Todd Haynes).
Theatre 2: "The Comfort of Strangers" (†).
Theatre 3: "La Femme Nikita" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Ballad of the Sad Café" (†).
Theatre 5: "Drowning by Numbers" (Peter Greenaway).
Theatre 6: "Tatie Danielle" (Etienne Chatiliez, in French), with Tsilla Chelton.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Gun Crazy" (1949, Joseph H. Lewis), with Peggy Cumming and John Dall; and "Terror in a Texas Town" (1958, Lewis), with Sterling Hayden and Sebastian Cabot.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through May 23: "Out for Justice" (John Flynn), with Steven Seagal. From May 24: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 2: "Mannequin Two: On the Move" (Stewart Raffill).
Theatre 3: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: From May 24: "Thelma & Louise" (Ridley Scott), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis.
Theatre 2: From May 24: "Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall.
Theatre 3: From May 24: "Citizen Kane" (†).
Theatre 4: From May 24: "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling.
Theatre 5: From May 24: "Truth or Dare" (Alek Keshishian), with Madonna.
Theatre 6: From May 24: To be announced.
Theatre 7: From May 24: To be announced.

Cinema Village 12th Street, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Eating" (†).

Village East Cinemas, *2nd Ave. at 12th.* (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Defending Your Life" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dances with Wolves" (Kevin Costner), with Costner.
Theatre 3: Through May 21: "The Object of Beauty" (†). From May 22: "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).
Theatre 4: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.
Theatre 5: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 6: "Journey of Hope" (†).
Theatre 7: "The British Animation Invasion," twenty-five short films.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: Through May 23: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†). From May 24: "Hangin' with the Homeboys" (Joseph Vasquez).
Theatre 2: "Toy Soldiers" (†).
Theatre 3: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.
Theatre 4: Through May 23: "Citizen Kane" (†). From May 24: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 5: "A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, Danny Glover, and Robin Givens.
Theatre 6: "Alice" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through May 23: "Oscar" (†).
From May 24: "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and *Michael Schoeffling.*

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through May 23: "Mannequin Two: On the Move" (Stewart Raffill).
From May 24: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 2: "Defending Your Life" (†).
Theatre 3: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.
Theatre 4: "The Object of Beauty" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, Danny Glover, and Robin Givens.
Theatre 2: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.
Theatre 3: Through May 23: "Stone Cold" (Craig R. Baxley), with Brian Bosworth. From May 24: "Thelma & Louise" (Ridley Scott), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through May 23: "A Kiss Before Dying" (†).
From May 24: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Dances with Wolves" (Kevin Costner), with Costner.

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: Through May 23: "Oscar" (†). From May 24: "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling.
Theatre 2: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.

Gotham Cinema, *3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)*
"Mannequin Two: On the Move" (Stewart Raffill).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
Through May 21: "Truly, Madly, Deeply" (†).
From May 22: "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Stone Cold" (Craig R. Baxley), with Brian Bosworth.
Theatre 2: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.

59th Street East Cinema, *239 E. 59th.* (759-4630)
"A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, Danny Glover, and Robin Givens.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through May 23: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly. From May 24: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.
Theatre 2: Through May 23: "A Kiss Before Dying" (†). From May 24: "Backdraft."

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Opening Night" (1977, John Cassavetes), with Gena Rowlands, Ben Gazzara, Joan Blondell, and Cassavetes.
Theatre 2: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 3: "Defending Your Life" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through May 23: "Toy Soldiers" (†). From May 24: "Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall.
Theatre 2: Through May 23: "Out for Justice" *(John Flynn), with* Steven Seagal. From May 24: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through May 23: "Impromptu" (†).
From May 24: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through May 23: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†). From May 24: "Thelma & Louise" (Ridley Scott), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis.
Theatre 2: Through May 23: "Requiem for Dominique" (Robert Dornhelm). From May 24: "Hangin' with the Homeboys" (Joseph Vasquez).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Strangers in Good Company" (Cynthia Scott).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Truth or Dare" (Alek Keshishian).

U.A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Mannequin Two: On the Move" (Stewart Raffill).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Stone Cold" (Craig R. Baxley), with Brian Bosworth.
Theatre 2: Through May 23: "A Kiss Before Dying" (†). From May 24: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through May 23: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits. From May 24: "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling.
Theatre 2: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through May 21: "Herdsmen of the Sun" (1988, directed by Werner Herzog) and "Black Water" (Allen Moore). From May 22: "The Wonderful World of Dogs" (Mark Lewis) and "A Little Vicious" (Immy Humes).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Paris Is Burning" (†).

Bleecker Movie House, 144 Bleecker St. (807-9205)
"The Vanishing" (George Sluizer; in Dutch and French).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: Through May 23: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†). From May 24: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.
Theatre 2: "A Kiss Before Dying" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, Danny Glover, and Robin Givens.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through May 23: "Impromptu" (†). From May 24: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.
Theatre 2: "Stone Cold" (Craig R. Baxley), with Brian Bosworth.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Oscar" (†).
Theatre 2: "Daddy Nostalgia" (Bertrand Tavernier; in English and French), with Dirk Bogarde and Jane Birkin.
Theatre 3: "Alice" (†).
Theatre 4: "Reversal of Fortune" (Barbet Schroeder), with Glenn Close, Jeremy Irons, and Ron Silver.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Defending Your Life" (†).
Theatre 2: "Truth or Dare" (Alek Keshishian), with Madonna.
Theatre 3: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.
Theatre 4: Through May 23: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly. From May 24: "Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall.
Theatre 5: "Mannequin Two: On the Move" (Stewart Raffill).
Theatre 6: Through May 23: "A Kiss Before Dying" (†). From May 24: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy.
Theatre 7: "Impromptu" (†).
Theatre 8: "Stone Cold" (Craig R. Baxley), with Brian Bosworth.
Theatre 9: Through May 23: "Truth or Dare." From May 24: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Object of Beauty" (†).
Theatre 2: "One Good Cop" (†).
Theatre 3: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through May 23: "Oscar" (†).
From May 24: "Thelma & Louise" (Ridley

Scott), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: Through May 21: "Mister Johnson" (Bruce Beresford), with Maynard Eziashi. From May 22: "Truly, Madly, Deeply" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Object of Beauty" (†).
Theatre 3: "Mortal Thoughts" (Alan Rudolph), with Demi Moore and Glenne Headly.
Theatre 4: "Drowning by Numbers" (Peter Greenaway).
Theatre 5: "Alice" (†).
Theatre 6: "Impromptu" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through May 23: "Spartacus" (1960, Stanley Kubrick), with Kirk Douglas, Laurence Olivier, and Jean Simmons.
From May 24: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through May 23: "Citizen Kane" (†).
From May 24: "Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Daddy Nostalgia" (Bertrand Tavernier; in English and French), with Dirk Bogarde and Jane Birkin.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Tatie Danielle" (Etienne Chatiliez, in French), with Tsilla Chelton.
Theatre 2: "La Femme Nikita" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"An Angel at My Table" (Jane Campion), with Kerry Fox.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"The Object of Beauty" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Defending Your Life" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
Through May 23: "A Kiss Before Dying" (†).
From May 24: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven, in German), with Lena Stolze.
Theatre 2: "Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, in French), with Gérard Depardieu.
Theatre 3: "Ju Dou" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through May 23: "The Object of Beauty" (†).
From May 24: "Drop Dead Fred" (Ate de Jong), with Phoebe Cates and Rik Mayall.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Truth or Dare" (Alek Keshishian), with Madonna.
Theatre 2: Through May 23: "Toy Soldiers" (†). From May 24: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 3: Through May 23: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits. From May 24: "Thelma & Louise" (Ridley Scott), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis.
Theatre 4: "What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 5: Through May 23: "One Good Cop" (†). From May 24: "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling.
Theatre 6: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Mannequin Two: On the Move" (Stewart Raffill).
Theatre 2: "Impromptu" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: Through May 23: "A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, Danny Glover, and Robin Givens. From May 24: "Backdraft" (Ron Howard), with Kurt Russell and William Baldwin.
Theatre 2: "Stone Cold" (Craig R. Baxley), with Brian Bosworth.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Toy Soldiers" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 23: "Out for Justice" (directed by John Flynn), with Steven Seagal. From May 24: "Hudson Hawk" (Michael Lehmann), with Bruce Willis.
Theatre 3: "Mannequin Two: On the Move" (Stewart Raffill).
Theatre 4: (Separate admissions) "The Five Heartbeats" (Robert Townsend), with Townsend; and "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze" (Michael Pressman).
Theatre 5: "Dice Rules" (Jay Dubin), Andrew Dice Clay in concert.
Theatre 6: Through May 23: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (Joseph Ruben), with Julia Roberts and Patrick Bergin. From May 24: "Only the Lonely" (Chris Columbus), with John Candy, Maureen O'Hara, and Ally Sheedy.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"What About Bob?" (Frank Oz), with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "FX2—The Deadly Art of Illusion" (Richard Franklin), with Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy.
Theatre 2: "One Good Cop" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 23: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†). From May 24: "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (Steve Miner), with Gabrielle Anwar and Michael Schoeffling.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"A Rage in Harlem" (Bill Duke), with Forest Whitaker, Gregory Hines, Danny Glover, and Robin Givens.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Stone Cold" (Craig R. Baxley), with Brian Bosworth.
Theatre 2: "A Kiss Before Dying" (†).

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "New Jack City" (Mario Van Peebles), with Wesley Snipes.
Theatre 2: "Switch" (Blake Edwards), with Ellen Barkin and Jimmy Smits.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
May 20: "The Third Man" (1950, directed by Carol Reed), with Orson Welles, Joseph Cotten, Alida Valli, and Trevor Howard; and "Journey Into Fear" (1943, Welles), with Welles, Dolores Del Rio, and Cotten.
May 21-22: "The Window" (1949, Ted Tetzlaff), with Bobby Driscoll, Arthur Kennedy, and Barbara Hale; and "The Set-Up" (1949, Robert Wise), with Robert Ryan, Audrey Totter, and Wallace Ford.
May 23-25: "The Little Foxes" (†); and "The Devil and Daniel Webster" (1941, William Dieterle), with Walter Huston, Edward Arnold, and Anne Shirley.
May 26-28: "Shadow of a Doubt" (1942, Alfred Hitchcock), with Teresa Wright, Joseph Cotten, Patricia Collinge, Hume Cronyn, and Henry Travers; and "Touch of Evil" (1958, Orson Welles), with Welles, Charlton Heston, and Janet Leigh.
From May 29: "On Dangerous Ground" (1952, Nicholas Ray), with Ida Lupino, Robert Ryan, and Ward Bond; and "A Woman's Secret" (1949, Ray), with Maureen O'Hara, Melvyn Douglas, Gloria Grahame, and Bill Williams.

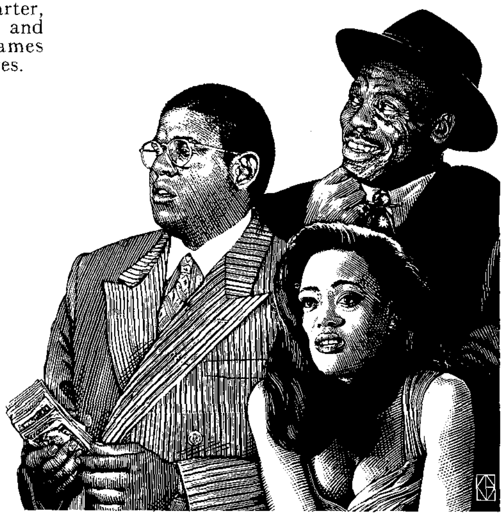
Cinema Village 3rd Avenue, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through May 23: "A Room with a View" (1986, James Ivory), with Maggie Smith, Denholm Elliott, Helena Bonham-Carter, Julian Sands, and Daniel Day Lewis; and "Maurice" (1987, Ivory), with James Wilby, Hugh Grant, and Rupert Graves.
From May 24: To be announced.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
May 20: "Ninotchka" (1939, Ernst Lubitsch), with Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, and Sig Rumann; and "Ball of Fire" (1942, Howard Hawks), with Barbara Stanwyck, Gary Cooper, Dana Andrews, and Dan Duryea.
May 21-22: "A Foreign Affair" (1948, Billy Wilder), with Jean Arthur, Marlene Dietrich, and John Lund; and "The Emperor Waltz" (1948, Wilder), with Bing Crosby and Joan Fontaine.
May 23: "Champagne Waltz" (1937, Edward Sutherland), with Gladys Swarthout and Fred MacMurray; and "Adorable" (1933, William Dieterle), with Janet Gaynor.
May 24-25: "Stalag 17" (†); and "Sabrina" (1954, Billy Wilder), with Humphrey Bogart, Audrey Hepburn, William Holden, and John Williams.
May 26-27: "Midnight" (†); and "Bluebeard's Eighth Wife" (†).
May 28: "Music in the Air" (1934, Joe May), with Gloria Swanson and John Boles; and "Lottery Lover" (1935, William Thiele), with Lew Ayres.
From May 29: "Arise, My Love" (1940, Mitchell Leisen), with Claudette Colbert, Ray Milland, Walter Abel, and Dennis O'Keefe; and "Hold Back the Dawn" (1941, Leisen), with Olivia de Havilland, Charles Boyer, and Paulette Goddard.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
May 20: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919, Robert Wiene; a German silent film), with Werner Krauss, Conrad Veidt, Lil Dagover, and Friedrich Feher; and "M" (1932, Fritz Lang; in German), with Peter Lorre.
May 21: "Whirlpool" (1950, Otto Preminger), with Gene Tierney, José Ferrer, and Richard Conte; and "Where the Sidewalk Ends" (1950, Preminger), with Tierney, Dana Andrews, and Gary Merrill.
May 22: "Pretty Poison" (1968, Noel Black), with Anthony Perkins and Tuesday Weld; and "Point Blank" (1967, John Boorman), with Lee Marvin, Angie Dickinson, Carroll O'Connor, and Keenan Wynn.
May 23: "Next Stop, Greenwich Village" (1976, Paul Mazursky), with Shelley Winters, Lenny Baker, Ellen Greene, Christopher Walken, and Antonio Fargas; and "Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice" (†).
May 24-25: "Five Easy Pieces" (†) and "Easy Rider" (†).
May 26: "A Night at the Opera" (1935, Sam Wood) and "A Day at the Races" (1937, Wood), both with the Marx Brothers.
May 27: "Los Olvidados" (†); and "Viridiana" (1961, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal and Silvia Pinal.
May 28: "Phone Call from a Stranger" (1952, Jean Negulesco), with Shelley Winters, Gary Merrill, and Bette Davis; and "The Scapegoat" (1959, Robert Hamer), with Alec Guinness and Bette Davis.
May 29: "The Sound and the Fury" (1969, Martin Ritt), with Yul Brynner, Joanne Woodward, and Margaret Leighton; and "Intruder in the Dust" (1949, Clarence Brown), with Claude Jarman, Jr., and Juano Hernández.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—May 20 at 3: "Alias Will James" (1989, directed by Jacques Godbout). . . . ¶ May 20 at 6:30: "Broken Meat" (1990) and other works by Pola Rappaport, who will be present. . . . ¶ May 21 at 3: Three films by Max Linder; and "Le Cinéma de Pêche" (1989, Gabriel Gonnet; in French). . . . ¶ May 21 at 6: Short films by Bruce Baillie, Stan Brakhage, and Ernie Gehr. . . . ¶ May 23 at 3 and 6: "Tongues Untied" (1989, Marlon Riggs). . . . ¶ May 24 at 3: "Mr. Hoover and I" (1989, Emile de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 24 at 6: "A Memory of László Moholy-Nagy" (1989, John Halas) and five films by Moholy-Nagy. . . . ¶ May 25 at noon: A program of short films by Norman McLaren, Graham Crabtree, René Jodoin, Wolf Koenig, and Roman Kroiter. . . . ¶ May



Forest Whitaker, Danny Glover, and Robin Givens in "A Rage in Harlem"

MOVIE HOUSES-Cont'd

25 at 2:30: "The Inspector" (1988, Arthur Omar; in Portuguese); and "Maria Candelaria" (1943, Emilio Fernandez; in Spanish), with Dolores del Rio and Pedro Armendariz, Jr.... ¶ May 25 at 5: "From These Roots" (1974, William Greaves), a documentary; and "Borderline" (1928, Kenneth MacPherson), with Paul Robeson.... ¶ May 26 at 2:30: A program of short animated films by Joanna Priestley.... ¶ May 26 at 5: "Deal" (1984, John Schott and E. J. Vaughn), a documentary on the TV show "Let's Make a Deal."... ¶ May 27 at 2:30: A program of short films by Jack Smith, Conrad Friberg, and others.... ¶ May 27 at 5: A program of short animated films by Suzan Pitt, Anita Thacher, and David Ehrlich.... ¶ May 28 at 3: A program of animated films by Pat Sullivan, Max Fleischer, and others.... ¶ May 28 at 6: Ten "Felix the Cat" shorts from 1919 to 1928.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"The Art of Reality: Innovators of the Documentary." May 25 at 2: "America Lost and Found: The Depression Decade" (1980, Tom Johnson and Lance Bird).... ¶ May 25 at 4: "The Brooklyn Bridge" (1982, Ken Burns).... ¶ May 26 at 2: "Underground" (1976, Mary Lampson and Emile de Antonio).... ¶ May 26 at 4: "The Police Tapes" (1976, Alan and Susan Raymond).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—May 21 at 6:15 and May 22 at 2: "The Lost Weekend" (1989, Gregg Araki).... ¶ May 23-26 at 2: "Privilege" (1990, Yvonne Rainer).

Museum of Television and Radio, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"On Stage at Carnegie Hall: A Centennial Celebration." May 21-25: "A Pretty Good Night at Carnegie Hall" (1989, Disney), with Garrison Keillor and Chet Atkins.... From May 28: "Folk Music in the Concert Hall" (1961, CBS), an episode of "Young People's Concerts," with Leonard Bernstein. Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30.... ¶ "A Salute to Monty Python." From May 21: "Do Not Adjust Your Stocking" (1968), a Yuletide episode; and "Ripping Yarns: Roger of the Raj" (1979, BBC). Showings Tuesdays at 12:15, 2:30, and 5:30; Wednesdays through Fridays at 12:15 and 2:30; and Saturdays at 12:15.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 22 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Topaze" (1933, Louis Gasnier; in French), with Louis Jouvet, Edwige Feuillère, Simone Héliard, and Marcel Vallée.... ¶ May 29 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "L'Enfance de l'Art" (1988, Francis Girod; in French), with André Dussollier.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—May 21 at noon: "Raging Bull" (1980, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, and Joe Pesci.... ¶ May 21 at 2:30: "A Dog of Flanders" (1959, James B. Clark), with David Ladd, Donald Crisp, and Theodore Bikel.... ¶ May 23 at noon: "Mzima: Portrait of a Spring" (1983) and "Year of the Wildebeest" (1984), both directed by Alan and Joan Root.... ¶ May 28 at noon: "Body and Soul" (1947, Robert Rossen), with John Garfield and Lilli Palmer.... ¶ May 28 at 2:30: "The Jungle Book" (1942, Zoltán Korda and André de Toth), with Sabu.

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—"William Greaves: Chronicler of the African-American Experience." May 25 at 7:30: "Still a Brother: Inside the Negro Middle Class" (1968).... ¶ May 26 at 2: "Emergency Ward" (1958), "A Wealth of a Nation" (1964), "First World Festival of Negro Arts" (1966), and "Just Doin' It" (1976).

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—May 23 at 1, 4:30, and 8: "The Sermon: The Building of the National Black United Front" (1987, Bob Knight); "The FBI's War on Black America" (1990, Denis Mueller); and "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" (1973, Ivan Dixon), with Lawrence Cook.

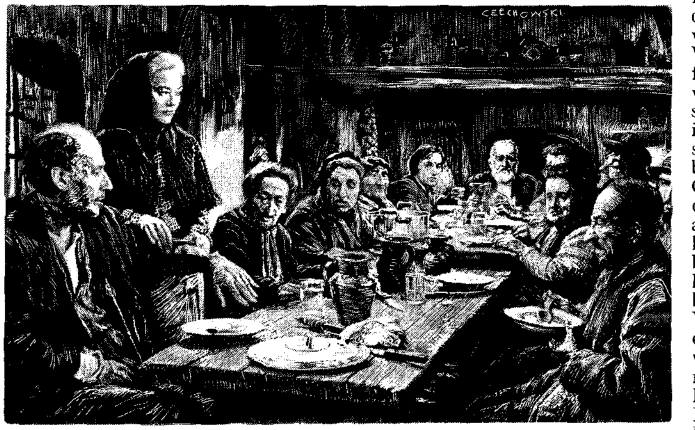
IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Alice—Woody Allen's latest picture is an awkward blend of whimsy and moralizing. The title character, played by Mia Farrow, is a pampered Upper East Side lady-who-lunches. She lives in a huge apartment with her handsome husband (William Hurt), her adorable children, and a staff, and she looks terrific. But her life, the movie tells us, is totally empty and false. A Chinatown doctor (Keye Luke) gives her a variety of herbal remedies to knock the yuppie malaise out of her system. One of them makes her invisible; one makes her irresistible to men; and so on. As these fantasy episodes mount up, Alice begins to see how artificial her life is, how far she's strayed from the pure ideals of her Catholic girlhood, how much more love she needs than she has been getting, and what a revolting piece of Wasp slime her husband is. In the end, the heroine seems, incredibly, to have redeemed herself through self-absorption; the movie doesn't benefit from any such miracle. Although there are more jokes here than in any of Allen's last few features, the picture isn't really a comedy; it's a sermon with gags. The large cast also includes Joe Mantegna, Alec Baldwin, Blythe Danner, Judy Davis, Bob Balaban, and Bernadette Peters (who does a sensational brief turn as a cynical muse).—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/31/90.) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Quad Cinema, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

The Ballad of the Sad Café—An adaptation, directed by Simon Callow, of Carson McCullers' fable about unhappy love in a tiny Deep South mill town. The story describes a perfect circle of unrequited love among its three main characters: Miss Amelia Evans (Vanessa Redgrave), a tall, awkward woman who is the town's wealthiest resident and its most forbidding eccentric; her cousin Lymon (Cork Hubbert), a hunchbacked dwarf; and a mean cracker named Marvin Macy (Keith Carradine), who was once, briefly, Amelia's husband. Callow and the screenwriter, Michael Hirst, have adapted the story very faithfully, but they've missed its elusive, slyly comic voice. The narrative unfolds in a solemn, glum, stately manner—more like a Biblical parable than like a crazy backwoods folktale. The filmmakers seem to have been deceived by the apparent simplicity of McCullers' style—its fablelike directness and its bedtime-story intimacy of tone. They aim for a kind of mythic purity that's almost impossible to achieve in the movies. Despite the heroic efforts of Redgrave and Carradine, the characters in this picture don't seem quite human, and the stylized dialogue, much of it lifted outright from McCullers, doesn't have the poetic force that the filmmakers must have hoped it would have; everyone in the movie just sounds simple-minded. This picture is a brave undertaking, and it is clearly a labor of love, but it's doomed. Like all the strange loves in McCullers' story, it does not have a fortunate outcome: its object remains alone, untouched—impervious to the tenderest attentions. Also with Rod Steiger, Lanny Flaherty, and Earl Hindman.—T.R. (5/20/91) (Angelika Film Center.)



*At Theatre 80 St. Marks,
Silvia Pinal and guests in "Viridiana"*

Bluebeard's Eighth Wife (1938)—A miscast Gary Cooper in a flat comedy, adapted by Brackett and Wilder from the Alfred Savoir play, and directed by Lubitsch. The gimmick is that Cooper has been divorced seven times; his eighth wife, Claudette Colbert, tries to make their marriage last by the supposedly hilarious expedient of refusing to consummate it. Her ruses, which include munching on scallions, finally drive him to a nervous breakdown. The cast includes David Niven, Herman Bing, Elizabeth Patterson, Edward Everett Horton, Franklin Pangborn, and Warner Hymer, so there are some alleviating comic moments. The film bears a heavy mark of the studio, but there are background shots of France. (Sacha Guitry may be glimpsed coming out of a hotel in Cannes.)—P.K. (Film Forum 2; May 26-27.)

Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice (1969)—A lively, unabashedly commercial American comedy on the subject of modern sexual mores—the first feature directed by Paul Mazursky. The period is 1969, when the concept of legal marriage is being undermined and Southern California middle-class people are culturally uneasy about clinging to something square, and personally tantalized by thoughts of the sex possibilities they're missing; swinging is in the air. The film contrasts the marriage of Robert Culp, as a documentary filmmaker, and his wife, Natalie Wood, with the mismatch of Dyan Cannon and her lawyer husband, Elliott Gould—she's bored and he's bewildered. Mazursky and his co-writer, Larry Tucker, who served as producer, designed the picture as a series of sketches, letting the rhythm of the actors' interplay develop as it does in satiric improvisational-revue theatre. Natalie Wood is the wrong kind of actress for this material; she's still doing what she was doing as a child—still telegraphing us that she's being cute—and when she tries hard she just becomes an agitated iron butterfly. But the scenes involving Gould and Cannon are small miracles of timing; Cannon (who looks a bit like Lauren Bacall and a bit like Jeanne Moreau, but the wrong bits) is also remarkably funny in her scenes with an analyst (played by the analyst Donald F. Muhich). You can feel something new in the comic spirit of this film—in the way Mazursky gets laughs by the rhythm of clichés, defenses, and little verbal aggressions. With Horst Ebersberg, K. T. Stevens, Lee Bergere, Greg Mullavey, and Garry Goodrow.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 23.)

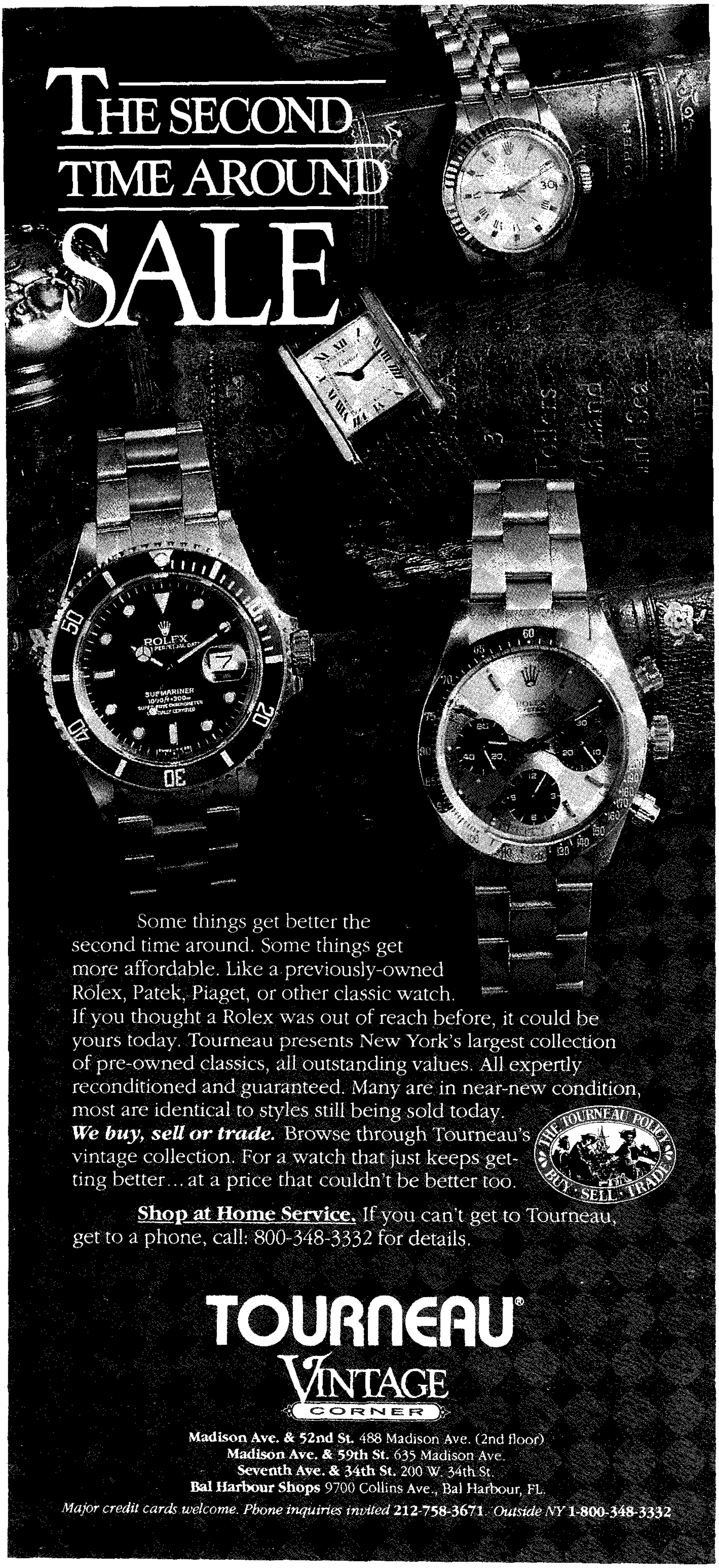
Citizen Kane (1941)—The Orson Welles film is generally considered the greatest American film of the sound period, and it may be more fun than any other great movie. Based on the life of William Randolph Hearst, it's an exuberant, muckraking attack on an archetypal economic baron. With Welles, of course, and Joseph Cotten, Dorothy Comingore, Agnes Moorehead, Everett Sloane, George Coulouris, Ruth Warrick, Ray Collins, Erskine Sanford, William Alland, Paul Stewart, Fortunio Bonanova, Gus Schilling, and Philip Van Zandt. Screenplay by Herman J. Mankiewicz and Welles; cinematography by Gregg Toland; editing by Robert Wise and Mark Robson; music by Bernard Herrman; art direction by Van Nest Polglase and Perry Ferguson.—P.K. (Loews 19th Street East 6, and Loews Festival; through May 23.... ¶ Loews

Village Theatre VII; starting May 24.)

The Comfort of Strangers—Harold Pinter's screenplay, adapted from a novel by Ian McEwan, is a kinky contemporary variation on the sort of plot that made Victorian readers shiver—the story of innocents lured into the clutches of charming villains. The innocents here are an unmarried English couple (Natasha Richardson and Rupert Everett) vacationing in Venice; the evil seducers are a husband and wife (Christopher Walken and Helen Mirren) whose tastes run to voyeurism and sadomasochism; the dread lair in which the monsters toy with their prey is a huge, ornately furnished apartment with a spectacular view of the city. The director, Paul Schrader, dresses his characters in Armani and sets the camera in motion to swirl gracefully around them, picking up miragelike shimmers from the canals and beautiful but ominous architectural details; the languorous camera movements create an authentically gothic sense of catastrophe just around the corner. Walken glides effortlessly through his role as the embodiment of Old World evil. He gives the character a lordly, sinister air, and suggests, as well, that he's wearing something really odd underneath his superbly tailored white suits. And Richardson is characteristically amazing: she brings a touch of humanity to this rather formal party. The movie improves on the novel by jettisoning its dubious psychology and its pretensions to literary significance. Schrader treats the story as an elegant horror-movie game, a trick done with mirrors, and he carries it off. Dante Spinotti's cinematography and Gianni Quaranta's production design contribute to the luxurious, decadent atmosphere. Music by Angelo Badalamenti. —T.R. (4/8/91) (Angelika Film Center.)

Defending Your Life—The setting of Albert Brooks' disappointing new comedy is a place called Judgment City, which, according to this picture, is where people from Southern California go after death. Here recently completed lives are examined and evaluated, in a formal proceeding something like a trial: if the defendant wins the case, he moves up the cosmic ladder to a higher form of consciousness. The hero, Daniel Miller (Brooks), a yuppie adman who met his untimely end in a brand-new BMW, naturally believes in upward mobility; in death, as in life, he wants to impress the higher-ups and get that promotion. Although this sounds like an ideal setup for Brooks' kind of comedy, the film is mild-mannered and blandly whimsical, and its rhythms are sluggish. The humor doesn't have any satiric edge, because the character Brooks has written for himself isn't the egotistical, grotesquely needy baby boomer he played in his three previous movies. Brooks is celebrating qualities he used to satirize, and there's something smarmy about his attempt to turn himself into a lovable schlemiel—to cast a warmer, more flattering light on the self that his other pictures mercilessly exposed. Also with Meryl Streep, Lee Grant, and, as the hero's lawyer, Rip Torn, who periodically energizes the movie with some lunatic courtroom theatricality.—T.R. (4/22/91) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews Paramount.)

Easy Rider (1969)—Two pothead bikers—Wyatt (Peter Fonda), who refers to himself as Captain America, and Billy (Dennis Hopper)—collect their money for a drug deal and set off on a cross-country quest for freedom, the freedom to "do your own thing." Hopper directed, Fonda produced, and they wrote the script, with Terry Southern. The picture—a road movie that's also a pop-mythology ballad movie—expressed the primitive religious element in the hippie movement. Wyatt and Billy (for Wyatt Earp and Billy the Kid) are long-haired Christ figures, and trigger-happy squares are out to get them. The two encounter a Southern lawyer (Jack Nicholson), a lush with the grin of a kid who hasn't grown up, and they introduce him to pot, but he doesn't get to enjoy it for long. The movie's sentimental paranoia obviously rang true to a young audience's vision. In the late sixties, it was cool to feel that you couldn't win, that everything was rigged and hopeless. The film was infused with an elegiac sense of American failure; and it had a psychedelic pull to it. The idea grew out of the A.I.P. Westerns on motorcycles such as "The Wild Angels," but this time everything was seen from the point of view of the bikers. The landscapes had dazzling textures; the terrific music by



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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

Jimi Hendrix, Roger McGuinn, and groups such as the Band and the Byrds gave the sluggish scenes a pulse; and Fonda, with his air of saintly noblesse oblige, died for American sins. The film became a ritual experience. It was the downer that young audiences wanted; they puffed away at it. Hopper became a culture hero; Nicholson, who's very funny in it, became a star. With Karen Black, Warren Finnerty, Robert Walker, Jr., Luana Anders, and Phil Spector as the connection. Cinematography by Laszlo Kovacs. —P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 24-25.)

Eating—All the action in Henry Jaglom's film takes place at the fortieth-birthday party of a Southern California woman named Helene (Lisa Richards), and all the characters—thirty-eight of them—are women. None of the women at this party—with the exception of Helene's mother (Frances Bergen), who represents the values of an older generation—can eat without guilt; several of them have clinical eating disorders, for which they hate themselves. Jaglom films them in his usual group-therapy style: the camera remains fixed as characters lob banal confessions and accusations at each other. This is meant to create the illusion of raw emotional truth, but the bulimics' ball Jaglom throws here isn't much of a party, and it's bad therapy, too. The big naked truth that pops out of the cake is: women are so obsessed with their bodies that they're incapable of enjoying even the simple pleasure of eating. Whatever Jaglom may have intended, his film winds up trivializing its theme and humiliating its subjects. He's advertising the movie as "A Very Serious Comedy About Women and Food," but its "serious" message is glibly offensive, and there's nothing funny about it. Also with Gwen Welles, Mary Crosby, Nelly Alard, Marlena Giovi, and Daphna Kastner. —T.R. (5/20/91) (Cinema Village 12th Street.)

La Femme Nikita—The end of French cinema as we know it. Written and directed by Luc Besson. With Anne Parillaud, Jean-Hugues Anglade, Tcheky Karyo, and (in a cameo) Jeanne Moreau. In French.—T.R. (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Five Easy Pieces (1970)—Jack Nicholson plays a drifter named Bobby Dupea, who, as the movie opens, is holding down a grimy job in an oil field, hanging out in bowling alleys and trailer parks, and squabbling with his childlike, clinging girlfriend, Rayette (Karen Black). His relationship to this life is edgy, remote: he'll look as if he's having a good time and then abruptly withdraw into an unreadable silence, or explode with anger at some trivial irritation. We later learn that Bobby is a dropout from a somewhat higher-toned world—the black sheep of a family of classical musicians who live the cultured life on an island retreat in the Pacific Northwest. He's persuaded by his sister (Lois Smith) to return home to see his father (William Challee), who has been paralyzed by a couple of strokes, and the movie, along with its protagonist, tries to make the leap from Tammy Wynette country to someplace in Ingmar Bergman's neighborhood. (Challee's white-bearded patriarch—speechless, immobilized, and imposing—turns out to be our old Scandinavian friend, The Silence of God.) Directed by Bob Rafelson from a script by Carol Eastman (writing under the name Adrien Joyce), the movie is a very self-conscious attempt to apply a European art-film sensibility to American realities, and it doesn't succeed. The picture—perhaps reflecting its times better than it knows—has an air of complexity, even profundity, but it's really just schizophrenia with a literary shine. Rafelson and Eastman don't know what to make of the provocative opposition they've set up between the worlds of the working class and the educated, so each group is in turn condescended to and ringingly endorsed (and then put down again). Every attitude in the movie is struck emphatically, and emphatically cancelled out elsewhere; this dazing barrage of self-contradiction is a poor substitute for ambiguity. Nicholson, who's in every scene, is so good that he almost manages to mask the film's confusions. He plays a nearly unplayable role with unforced brilliance, a varied and thrillingly confident attack. Also with Susan Anspach and Billy (Green) Bush. Cinematography by Laszlo Kovacs.—T.R. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 24-25.)

Impromptu—James Lapine's film is an ebullient and absurdly entertaining account of the famous love affair of George Sand and Frédéric Chopin. The script, by Sarah Kernochan, makes Sand's wooing and winning of frail, chaste young Chopin into a busy exercise in farce, with a full complement of deception and setbacks and misunderstandings. Celebrities of the Romantic movement—Delacroix, Musset, and Liszt among them—are put through their paces, along with George and Frédéric, in the salons and ballrooms and country houses of eighteen-thirties France; they issue florid declarations of love, hurl barbed epigrams at their rivals, challenge each other to duels, and, over all, make complete asses of themselves in their pursuit of the sublime. They're lively company. The historical figures in this movie are cartoons, but they're cartoons with recognizable human qualities, and the actors look as if they were having a wonderful time charging around in their period costumes. Hugh Grant's Chopin is a brilliant caricature of the Romantic ideal of the artist; he gives the character an air of befuddled unworldliness, and punctuates his readings with delicately timed tubercular coughs. Judy Davis plays Sand—a great actress in a great role. Davis makes Sand's passionate absurdities both funny and tremendously moving; this woman's willingness to embarrass herself seems a kind of romantic heroism. Also with Bernadette Peters, Julian Sands (as Liszt), Mandy Patinkin (as Musset), Emma Thompson, Ralph Brown (as Delacroix), George Corraface, Anton Rodgers, and Anna Masset. The costumes, by Jenny Beavan, are spectacular.—T.R. (5/6/91) (Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Beekman, and Art Greenwich Twin; through May 23.)

Journey of Hope—It's actually a journey into fear: a struggling Turkish farmer takes his wife and young son on a perilous trek to Switzerland, hoping to find "paradise behind the mountains." Black-market operators strip them of their possessions and dignity. The action in this icy muckraker culminates when the family and other Turks cross the Alps at night—without a guide—in a snowstorm. Inspired by a 1988 newspaper article, Xavier Koller's movie is just as topical now—it recalls the Kurdish catastrophe, even though these Turks are economic (not political) refugees, fleeing by the dozens (not the hundreds of thousands). But Koller doesn't give the audience a guide, either; he fails to lay out the issues coherently and dramatically. Intentionally or not, he makes his hero (the dour patriarch) seem foolish for abandoning a harsh but organic rural life. For better or worse—mostly worse—"Journey of Hope" duplicates the Latin-American refugee saga "El Norte": the eerie, harrowing border crossings are the only scenes as powerful as they should be. The rest amount to a lament for the dysfunctional Family of Man. (In Turkish, Italian, and Swiss German, with English and French subtitles.)—M.S. (Village East Cinemas.)

Ju Dou—It's been compared to James M. Cain, but the postman barely rings once in this tale of adultery Chinese style. In a small mountain village in the twenties, an impotent dye-mill owner (Li Wei), crazed over his lack of an heir, tortures his beautiful young bride (Gong Li). She seeks comfort in the arms of his worker nephew (Li Bao-Tian). There's no compelling plot, only the grinding inevitability of fate and tradition. The director, Zhang Yimou, simply metes out punishment to the lovers, the tyrant—and the audience. The lovers' son does most of the damage. He has the lethal power of the Children of the Damned—unfortunately, without the gimmicky zest of their eerie, glowing eyeballs. Zhang started out as a painter and still photographer. He remains one, devoting more attention to the dye mill's set design than to the story or the characters. The bolts of fabric are colored in subtle, vivid hues; the people are made out of whole cloth. In Mandarin.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza.)

A Kiss Before Dying—Splat! That's the sound of one rich twin clapping to the ground. Soon, Matt Dillon, her lover-killer, moves on to her identical sister (Sean Young plays both women). The writer-director, James Dearden, botches Ira Levin's creepy best-seller about an upwardly mobile psychopath. (This version is even worse than the 1956 one starring Robert Wagner and Joanne Woodward.) Dillon takes a vacation from his "Drugstore Cowboy" level of acting; Young hasn't earned one yet. He practices somnambulism and she impersonates dual zombies. Dearden's idea of black comedy is to show "Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein" on a hotel TV while Dillon, in the manner of "Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer," dismembers a body in the bathtub. Co-starring Max von Sydow and Joy Lee.—M.S. (Waverly, and National Twin. . . . ¶ 34th St. East, Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway; through May 23.)

The 1939 romantic farce "Midnight" (playing May 26-27 at Film Forum 2) contains as many surprises as a careful of Cracker Jack, and they build in a blissful, uninterrupted chain. It's equal parts screwball and highball. The heroine is Eve Peabody (Claudette Colbert), a chorine from Kokomo who arrives in Paris with hopes of becoming a café singer. She immediately falls in love with an émigré Hungarian cabdriver, Tibor Czerny, and in like with a high-society circle that buys her pose as a Hungarian baroness. "Midnight" is the story of a self-made Cinderella—an American version who learns that money can be nice but that true lovers need no bank account. Eve says, "Every Cinderella has her midnight," yet in this movie the fateful hour never kicks in. The only pumpkin here is Czerny's cab, and if Don Ameche, as Czerny, isn't exactly princely, he is unexpectedly charming.

John Barrymore plays an upper-crust cuckold who resolves to win back his wife (Mary Astor) by abetting Eve's royal masquerade and throwing her in the path of his wife's lover (Francis Lederer). The film is so niftily constructed that this plan works out for everyone—even Czerny. Barrymore sustains a wildly eccentric comic style: half the time you can't tell whether he's scowling or leering. And the French-born, American-bred Colbert never looked more fetching than as this American in Paris. She's an exceptionally deft and sane comedienne, who can flirt without coming off as a tease. As directed by Mitchell Leisen, from a script by Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder, "Midnight" is a Rube Goldberg device manufactured by Rolls-Royce—and every hinge is lined with velvet.

The Little Foxes (1941)—Bette Davis's tight, dry performance was probably a mistake; her Regina is so villainous that this version of Lillian Hellman's play about a Southern family of predators doesn't have the temperament and drive that Tallulah Bankhead gave it on the stage. But it's a handsome movie melodrama, well contrived and showily acted. William Wyler directed; with Herbert Marshall, Teresa Wright, Patricia Collinge, Richard Carlson, Charles Dingle, and Dan Duryea, overdoing the whinnying weakling. —P.K. (Biograph Cinema; May 23-25.)

The Object of Beauty—Jake (John Malkovich) and Tina (Andie MacDowell) are a glamorous American couple camping out in a suite in a swank London hotel. They're unable to settle their account, which when the movie begins stands at about six thousand pounds, because Jake, a speculator, has blown all his money on a bad investment. Jake and Tina are unmarried and have no permanent address; they're charming, attractive drifters, getting by on style. In a sense, they're throwbacks to the sophisticated and slightly disreputable

Don Ameche and Claudette Colbert in "Midnight"

couples who floated airily through thirties romantic comedies: no-strings types who stick together for the best shallow reasons—for sex and laughs and the shared kick of living the high life without having to work too hard. The picture, written and directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg, is conceived as high-style fluff, but it never delivers quite as much irresponsible fun as it promises. It's like a Lubitsch movie without the speed and the grace and the blissful inconsequentiality. Malkovich, however, is as unaccountably magnetic here as he was in "Dangerous Liaisons." His performance is a postmodern mutation of thirties style, an ungodly hybrid of William Powell and Boris Karloff, and it's sensationally funny. This is as original a piece of acting as you'll ever see in a romantic comedy. The supporting players are an unusually lively group: Lolita Davidovich, Peter Riegert, Joss Ackland, and Bill Paterson.—T.R. (4/22/91) (Murray Hill Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, Worldwide Cinemas, and Cinema 3. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas; through May 21. . . . ¶ Regency; through May 23.)

Los Olvidados (1950; "The Young and the Damned")—Set in Mexico, Luis Buñuel's ruthless—almost surgical—examination of how the poor prey on one another is the most horrifying of all films about juvenile crime. The one masterwork on this subject, it stands apart from the genre by its pitilessness, its controlled passion. Buñuel doesn't treat his characters as ideas but as morally responsible human beings; there is little of the familiar American-movie cant that makes everyone responsible for juvenile crimes except the juveniles. There's no pathos in this film; it's a squalid tragedy that causes the viewer to feel a moral terror. Buñuel, whose early work fascinated Freud, creates scenes that shock one psychologically. Among them here is the mother-meat dream—perhaps the greatest of all movie dream sequences; it is disturbing long after the lacerations of the more realistic material have healed. Buñuel had intended much more in this surreal vein, but he did not have a completely free hand. For example, in the scene in which one of the boys goes to beat up and kill another boy, the camera reveals in the distance a huge eleven-story building under construction; Buñuel had wanted to put an orchestra of a hundred musicians in the building. The cast includes Estela Inda and Roberto Cobo; cinematography by Gabriel Figueroa. In Spanish.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 27.)

One Good Cop—One bad flop. Michael Keaton plays a top New York police detective who's married without children; Anthony LaPaglia plays his partner, a widower with three daughters. The most diverting aspect of LaPaglia's purely sacrificial character is the diversity of his facial scabs. The plot centers on exhaustion: the cops' caseload is so heavy that when LaPaglia and Keaton shoulder family responsibilities they get sloppy on the job. (Keaton even rips off a drug lord to make a down payment.) What's the filmmakers' excuse? Heywood Gould's writing and directing are notable solely for claustrophilia: the big action scenes take place in an elevator, a basement, a living room, and a bathroom. With Rita Russo (as Keaton's wife), Tony Plana (as the drug magnate), and Rachel Ticotin (who gives the one potent performance and pulls off a trick role).—M.S. (23rd St. West Triplex, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through May 23.)

Oscar—Fallen archness. This farce about a Prohibition racketeer named Snaps Provolone (Sylvester Stallone) is the kind of film in which an accountant named Little Anthony (Vincent Spano) is sure to drive an Imperial. As Snaps tries to go legit and marry off his restless daughter, the plot develops a bad case of mistaken identities. Written by Michael Barrie and Jim Mulholland (from a play by Claude Magnier), the film has farce mechanics but no fuel: the one thing at stake is Snaps' comical pride, and as Stallone plays him Snaps has no crackle, no pop. The cast includes Ornella Muti, Marisa Tomei, Peter Riegert, Richard Romanus, Don Ameche, Kurtwood Smith, and (in bit parts) Yvonne De Carlo and the always juicy Kirk Douglas. Several performers breathe levity into dead air—Harry Shearer and Martin Ferrero (as Snaps' tailors), Tim Curry (as his elocution teacher), and Eddie Bracken as a snitch with a stutter so extreme that it shades into mime. The director, John Landis, doesn't put a spin on the plot tricks—he piles them on like Lego blocks.—M.S. (Quad Cinema. . . . ¶ Gramercy, Sutton, and Guild; through May 23.)

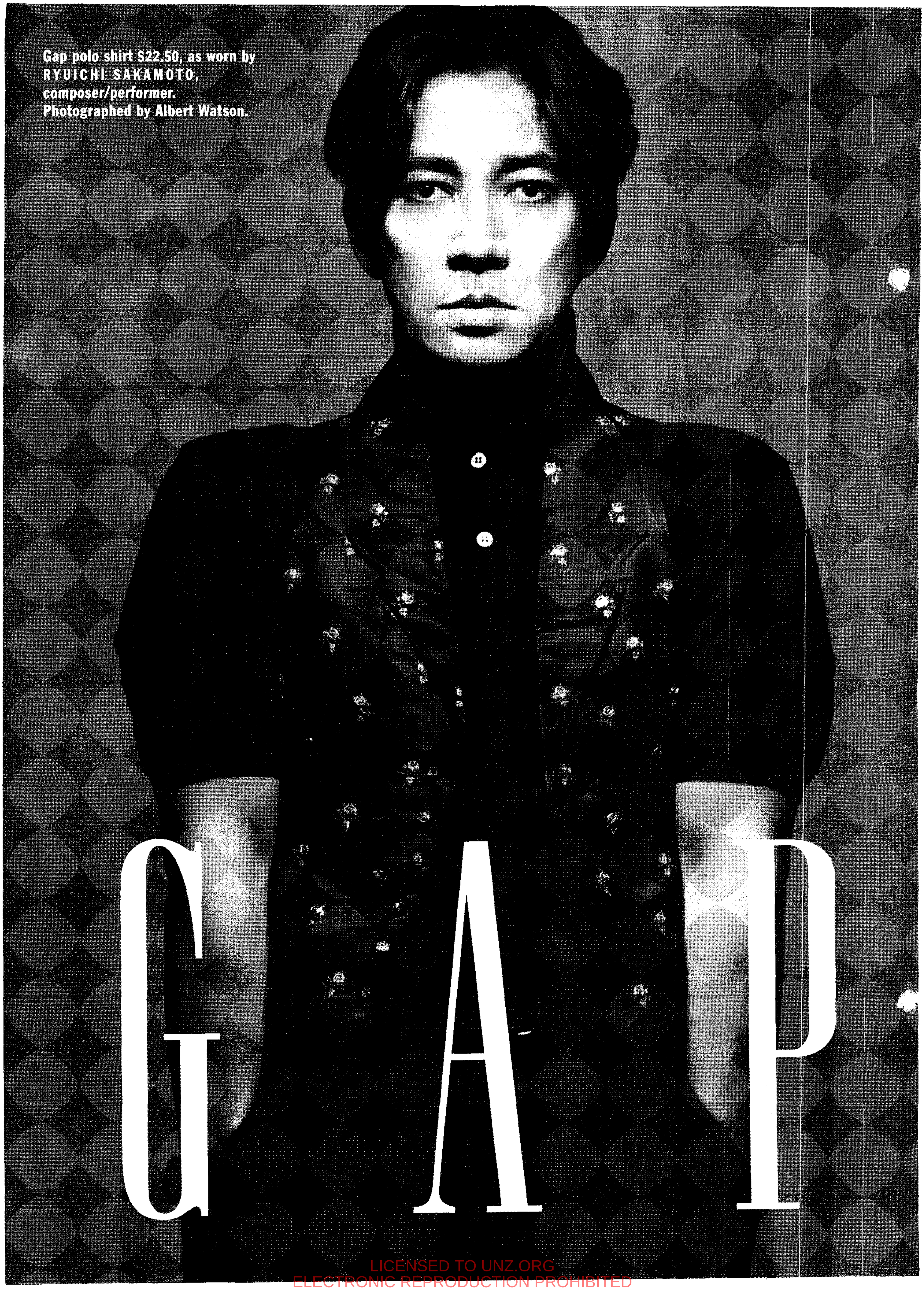
Paris Is Burning—Jennie Livingston's documentary about gay black and Latino men who compete in drag balls is a beautiful piece of work—lively, intelligent, exploratory. The drag queens we see here seem to be holding up a mirror to the world of the empowered as they see it in movies, TV shows, and magazines. In the ballroom, some present themselves as elegant, glamorous women in designer outfits, and walk with the hip-swinging slouch of runway models, while others adopt more mundane personas: college students (of both sexes); military men; Wall Street businessmen; aristocrats at play, dressed for yachting or riding to hounds. The criteria by which all these turns are judged is verisimilitude—"realness." The material is almost too rich, too suggestive. Everything about the ball culture signifies so blatantly and so promiscuously that the movie induces a kind of semiotic daze. Livingston is smart enough not to reduce her subjects to the sum of their possible meanings, perhaps because she realizes that the way the drag performers manipulate image and fetishes and the iconography of popular culture is for many of them a sophisticated form of humor. The most self-aware of the gay men in this picture revel in the ironies of their social and sexual identities, and Livingston makes us appreciate the comic grace and the strange wisdom of that approach. Like all the best documentary filmmakers, she does her subjects the honor of allowing them to retain some of their mystery. Edited by Jonathan Oppenheim.—T.R. (3/25/91) (Film Forum.)

The Silence of the Lambs—Adapted from a novel by Thomas Harris, Jonathan Demme's thriller is artful pulp—tabloid material treated with intelligence and care and a weird kind of sensitivity. The heroine, Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster), is an earnest F.B.I. trainee who is selected to interview Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), a psychiatrist who is also a famous mass murderer; her superiors hope that Lecter's twisted expertise can somehow be used to help them catch a serial killer known as Buffalo Bill, who flays his victims. In the course of the movie, these conversations between the trainee and the psychiatrist turn into edgy, complex transactions in which she reveals pieces of her inner life in return for his hints on how to find the killer. Hopkins plays the monster with a fine, cold relish: he gives the character a mesmeric animal stillness, the terrifying opacity of a cobra. And the impact of his performance is heightened by its contrast with everything surrounding it: the scrupulous realism of Demme's style, the mundane details of police procedure, and, in particular, the emotional transparence of the heroine. Demme keeps our attention on Starling and her shifting reactions to the world, and his most striking achievement in this picture is his direction of Jodie Foster. The suspense of this manhunt isn't of the straight-ahead kind we're used to: it's reflective, oscillating between approach and avoidance—it has an unnerving intimacy. Also with Scott Glenn, Ted Levine (as Buffalo Bill), Anthony Heald, and Brooke Smith. The screenplay, which is extremely faithful to the novel, is by Ted Tally.—T.R. (2/25/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews New York Twin, Waverly, and Embassy; through May 23.)

Stalag 17 (1953)—In this rowdy comedy about Americans in a German prisoner-of-war camp during the Second World War, William Holden's hair-trigger performance as the crafty, cynical heel who turns into a hero won him a new popularity, as well as the Academy Award for Best Actor. He had been a sensitive but milder actor before, and even the despairing range he demonstrated in "Sunset Boulevard" hadn't prepared audiences for the abrasive edge and distinctively American male energy he showed in this role, which is rather like the parts that catapulted Bogart to a new level of stardom in the early forties. The melodramatics of the plot are low grade, and the material, taken from a play by Donald Bevan and Edmund Trzcinski—two ex-G.I.s who were interned in the actual Stalag 17—is still structured and performed like a play, but the gallows humor is entertaining, despite some rather broad roughhouse effects. Billy Wilder directed and had a hand in the adaptation, and it's a safe bet that he'd taken a long look at "La Grande Illusion"—Otto Preminger does an Erich von Stroheim-*Kommandant* number. With Don Taylor, Robert Strauss, Harvey Lembeck, Neville Brand, Peter Graves, and Sig Rumann.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; May 24-25.)

Toy Soldiers—The movie equivalent of an action comic book made up entirely of teen sidekicks. The title characters are standard-issue smart-asses at a school of last resort for ne'er-do-well preppies. Their enemies are a remarkably stupid, brutal, and unlucky bunch of terrorists who always arrive too late and stay too long—no match for the Yankee ingenuity of half a dozen kids who are mostly dirty behind the ears. The bad guys are after the son of a federal judge who's trying a Latin-American drug baron; when they find out the boy has left the campus, they take the whole school hostage. It's slick swill, well edited by Michael Kahn. Daniel Petrie, Jr., directed, and co-wrote the youth-flattering script (from William P. Kennedy's novel) with David Koepp. With Sean Astin (the chief hell-raiser); Andrew Divoff (the chief terrorist—the drug lord's son); and Louis Gossett, Jr., and Denholm Elliott, who do their duty as the dean and the headmaster.—M.S. (Loews 19th Street East 6, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Gemini, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through May 23.)

Truly, Madly, Deeply—A lovely, original comedy about a young woman, named Nina (Juliet Stevenson), who is obsessed with the memory of her dead lover. The writer and director, Anthony Minghella, establishes an unusual, delicately varied mood, and the film moves gracefully from a realistic mode into a fantastic one. One night, Nina's lover, Jamie (Alan Rickman), reappears in her flat, and his presence seems perfectly natural to us: he has emerged from a setting that is already charged with the heroine's feelings for him. Once he's back, she has to confront, in the most concrete way, what it would really mean to live the rest of her life with a dead guy as her significant other: the movie is less a ghost story than a weird kind of domestic comedy. Minghella draws us into a fresh and startlingly humane vision of modern urban life; the details of the heroine's way of living always seem to point beyond themselves, and there's an emotional unity to everything we see. He writes dialogue that sounds casual but somehow takes us straight to the heart of his work's larger concerns, and he directs the actors beautifully. Rickman is unexpectedly romantic here, and very funny besides. And Stevenson gives a radiant performance: she doesn't have a false moment, or a boring one, in the whole picture. Also with Michael Maloney, Christopher Rózycki, Stella Maris, David Ryall, Deborah Findlay, and the always marvellous Bill Paterson. Cinematography by Remi Adefarasin.—T.R. (5/6/91) (Plaza; through May 21. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; starting May 22.)



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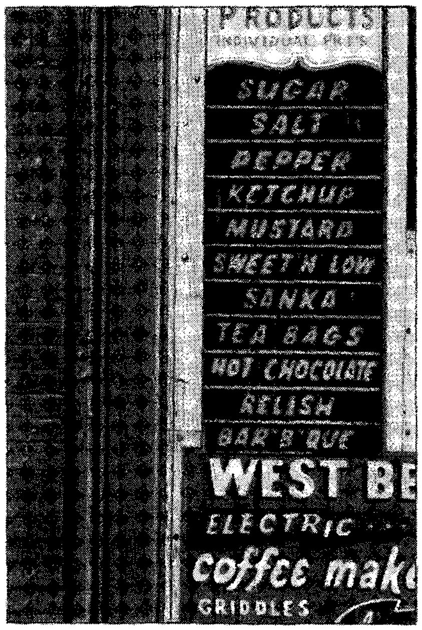
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

JUST when it seems that we have absorbed all the seismic shifts in world politics of the past couple of years, some startling feature of the new international terrain appears. One of the oddest of these developments to emerge recently was the news that the governments of South Africa and the Soviet Union are becoming friendly. Pretoria, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, has even proposed sister-city ties with Moscow. Considering the intensity of Pretoria's traditional fear and loathing of the Soviets—no American anti-Communist sect in its heyday had anything on the official demonization of the Soviet Union in South Africa—this is a diplomatic thaw of microwave proportions. But perhaps it shouldn't come as such a surprise that the governments of South Africa and the Soviet Union are now making common cause. The two nations have long collaborated in the international marketing of diamonds, and there is talk now of their forming a gold cartel. (Together, they produce roughly half of the world's gold.) Both are authoritarian regimes with little popular legitimacy. Both have followed periods of stunning *glasnost* with protracted exercises in crisis control, throwing their opponents into disarray with new combinations of tolerance and repression.

The African National Congress, the main opposition movement in South Africa—long denounced by Pretoria as a Soviet tool, because of the military assistance it accepted from Moscow and the Warsaw Pact countries—publicly objected to the rapprochement, on the ground that it was premature, but its objection was ignored. Perhaps the A.N.C. did not understand how suddenly and thoroughly the world has changed. Such incomprehension is understandable, given conditions in South Africa. Following the dramatic release, early last year, of Nelson Mandela, the legalization of the A.N.C. and other outlawed movements, and the repeal of some of the most notorious apartheid laws, actual progress toward peace and democracy has been slight. Not only is the white-minority government still solidly in power but the black opposition and the nonracial opposition are still being battered at every turn. Violent attacks on political activists are as common as ever, and, despite a government undertaking to release all political prisoners, some three hundred political trials are still making their way through the country's courts. Moreover, the government has delayed the promised releases for so long that at the beginning of this month more than two hundred political prisoners started a hunger strike, vowing to die rather than eat another meal in jail.



The most discouraging development of all, however, has been the South African government's willingness to countenance—perhaps even abet—a campaign of violence by some of its black allies against its opponents. Reports in the international press of this "black-on-black violence" have been generally unsatisfying. As if confused by the complexions of the participants, the reports often fail to point out just who is who. Specifically, they neglect to note the close association between the A.N.C.'s main antagonist—an organization known as Inkatha—and the state. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, the leader of Inkatha, is also the leader of KwaZulu, one of South Africa's "self-governing" tribal Bantustans. He is, in other words, a key official in the apartheid bureaucracy. (KwaZulu received nearly seven hundred million dollars' worth of assistance from Pretoria last year.) Inkatha, which was originally a Zulu "cultural movement" and last year became a political party, is essentially inseparable from the government in KwaZulu, where, it is said, in some areas one must be an Inkatha member to get a pension, for example. Thus, when Inkatha units declare war on the A.N.C. and rampage through neighborhoods considered pro-A.N.C., something more than black-on-black violence is occurring: allies of the apartheid state are attacking its opponents. And when A.N.C. supporters retaliate, the ensuing mayhem clearly strengthens the position of local pro-apartheid forces—that is, those white South Africans who continue to argue that blacks are not ready to participate in democratic politics. The police and the military are strongholds of such views, and the security forces have been accused again and again of assisting

Inkatha attacks or of standing by while slaughter proceeds.

Last year, when President F. W. de Klerk lifted the thirty-year ban on the A.N.C., he said, "The season of violence is over. The time for reconstruction and reconciliation has arrived." Since then, more than three thousand South Africans have died in political violence. Still, Mr. de Klerk and his government have been rewarded internationally just as if his announcement of peace had brought it. The South African President has been warmly received in numerous Western capitals, for instance, and the European Community recently voted to repeal economic sanctions against his nation.

Seen from afar—from overseas—the political picture in South Africa has become a great deal murkier in the months since Mandela's release and the unbanning of political opposition. The murk arises partly from the fuzzy reporting on the ongoing violence, partly from the diminished moral stature of the A.N.C. in the light of the Winnie Mandela case, and partly from the patient, effective stalling tactics of the state. The drift of international opinion has been that a solution is in the works—that the apartheid era is over—but, while many of the unique features of race rule in South Africa are indeed being removed, the true situation is one of deepening and intensifying political struggle, the outcome of which is not at all certain. Among poor black South Africans, prospects for a better life—for reducing some of the injustice and the terrible economic inequality in their country—are really little better today than they were last year, or the year before. Even if the A.N.C. comes to power, raising the general standard of living will probably remain a distant dream. Meanwhile, the white-minority government is playing for time, making new friends, and continuing to bludgeon its opponents as the restless world-press spotlight moves on.

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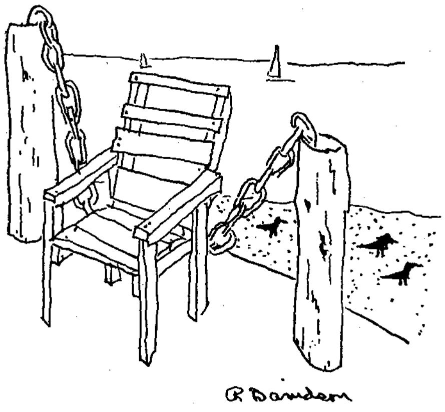
Fishing

WE'VE been thinking about tough times, and we wonder if this just might be the right moment to keep up public morale by paying more attention to luxuries. Consider Petrossian, over near Trump Parc. Since Petrossian was founded, in Paris in the early twenties, it has been associated with the sort of fare that most people would have to mortgage several family members to enjoy: foie gras and truffles from the Périgord, superb fish from the purest northern waters, and, naturally, Russian caviar. Lately, Petrossian has been trying to do its bit for our financially beleaguered city. There is a new Petrossian prix-fixe lunch—appetizer, entrée, and dessert—for a mere twenty-nine dollars. The establishment also has on sale a box of dark-and-milk-and-white-chocolate mushrooms with caramel and sweet crunchy centers at the bargain-basement price of twenty dollars for ten.

Of course, Petrossian remains the ultimate spot in New York for caviar, and at eleven hundred and fifty-five dollars for five hundred grams its caviar can't be called cheap. On the other hand, think about what its caviar can do for you. It's all-natural. It's almost healthful. (Less cholesterol than shellfish.) It's something you can give with impunity to both your mother and your mother-in-law, and you can roll it around on your tongue without getting drunk. Here, sample the beluga—we'll put a little on this miniature plastic spoon, like the one they use at Häagen-Dazs. Can you taste the Caspian Sea? Can you taste the labor-intensive process of harvesting the sturgeon in such a way that most of the three or four million eggs in each fish remain intact? Can you taste the overhead expense of maintaining the optimal refrigeration system? Can you taste the aesthetic simplicity?

We see that you're licking the shine off the handle. Please try to remember that Petrossian is a high-class operation. It has Limoges plates and famous clients and loads of pink marble and an icebox with nothing in it but a half-million dollars' worth of caviar. The dining room also serves hot food. For example, Petrossian has just introduced to its menu a troutlike salmon called Arctic char, which it imports from Iceland, and which its kitchen cooks about one nanosecond past the point of raw. The general manager of the United States operation, Dro Proudian, told us during a recent visit, "Arctic char is the cleanest, most peaceful-looking fish I've ever seen in my life. Have you ever seen a halibut or a flounder when they come into a restaurant kitchen? They look like they've been through the mill."



The staff at the Petrossian Boutique is efficient, knowledgeable, and mannerly. Nobody working there will ever make you feel embarrassed for asking what the difference is between your everyday Nova, which somebody probably pitched into a vat of brine before the smoking procedure, and the Petrossian smoked salmon, which was gently drizzled with salt by hand. Furthermore, if you're watching the pennies, the counterman, Wayne, can slice you a piece of salmon so thin that you can see a dollar bill through it. "I'm on top of every salmon in this boutique," Mr. Proudian told us. He also said that there is a gentleman from Thailand at Petrossian whose only job, eight hours a day, is to make blini. And the cleaning crew is impeccable. You could eat those blini right off the kitchen floor.

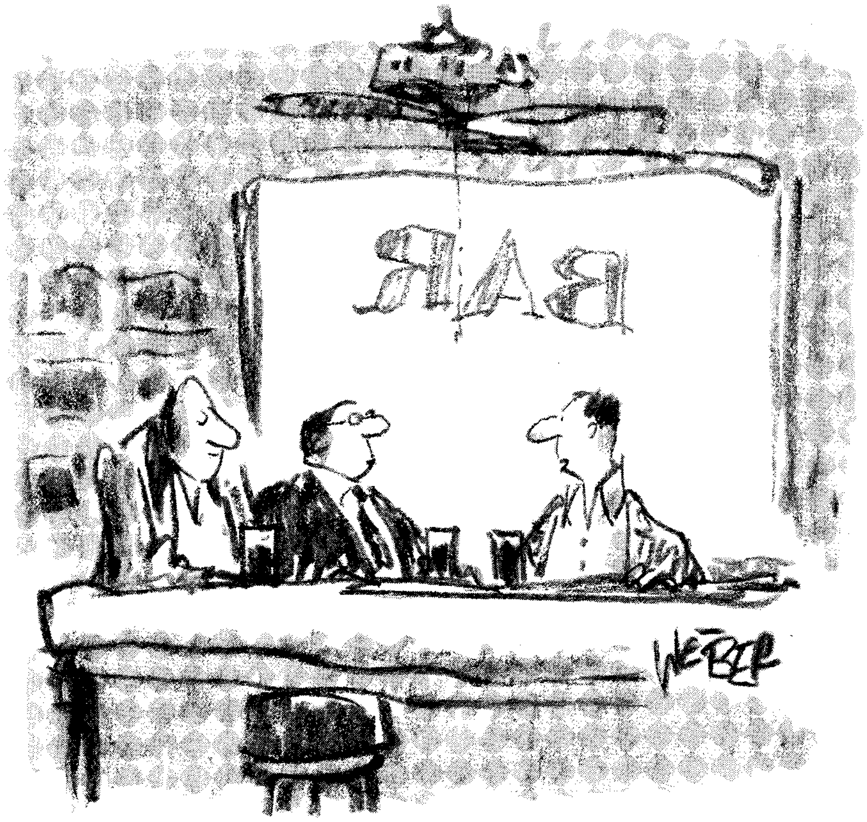
Speaking of the kitchen, we'd like you to meet Petrossian's brand-new executive chef, Rick Laakkonen. He's only thirty-three, but already he must be one of the most serious and dedicated chefs in this Zip Code. Mr. Laakkonen exhibits no temperament whatever. (Mr. Proudian says, "He's no screamer.") He's right over there, next to the fellow applying a blowtorch to the top of the crème brûlée—and that, as Mr. Proudian will tell you, is certainly not the way that everyone makes crème brûlée. Mr. Laakkonen is so serious about being a chef that when we asked him what he does during his time off he said, "I love to go to the Fulton Street fish market, I love to go fishing, and I love to go out to eat when I'm not cooking for myself."

We asked him if there was anything at all about food that he'd call funny.

"Hey," he said. "I was just commenting that you can go through fifty restaurants but some things don't change—little amusing things."

We asked him for an example. "Wait a minute," he said. "It will come to me." After a moment, he stood up and excused himself. "I'll just go ask somebody," he said.

Before we leave, let Mr. Proudian take you over to the bar and show you Petrossian's Golden Book, filled with the comments and autographs of the stars. This is history—one of the things that money can't buy. The volume itself is another matter. Mr. Proudian recently picked it up over at Lee's Art Shop, on Fifty-seventh Street, because the previous Golden Book had apparently vanished. Anyway, as you flip through it you can see the names of Hope Preminger, Gene Hackman, Norman Mailer and Norris Church, Victoria Principal, Jerome Robbins, Marian Seldes, and Cyndi Lauper. There is even a page of Cyrillic. "This is written in Russian," Mr. Proudian points out. "Who knows what it says?"



"I happen to be one of those who do not hold with the view that Dan Quayle is less than mediocre."

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Hair

WHEN we got a card recently from the man who cuts our hair saying that he was joining the staff of a salon operated by Bob Recine, an "editorial hairdresser," we pictured someone going from office to office with scissors and comb, trimming the bangs of the proofreader, arranging pencils in the copy chief's hair, maybe giving highlights to a fiction editor. But Veronica, the manager of Recine New York, which is a marble-floored, mirror-walled establishment in Chelsea, told us that editorial hairdressing is something else. "It's more than hair," she said. "It's photographers, designers, getting along with people." To illustrate, she showed us her boss's book, "Recine—Hair," which consisted of offprints from fashion magazines (*Vogue*, *Glamour*, *Mademoiselle*, *Per Lui*, *Lei*, *Elle*, French *Vogue*, and British *Vogue* among them) featuring women on beaches and women on motorcycles, in faraway places like Singapore and Capri. In many of the shots, the hair looked artless, even messy—as if the model had just tied it up any old way before taking a bath.

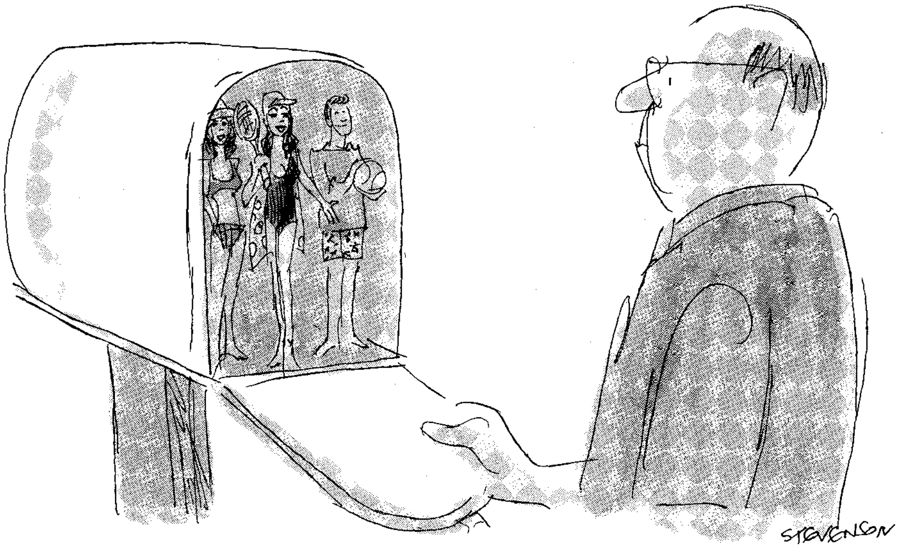
"I am not a normal-trained hairdresser," Bob Recine himself told us. "I see hair as fabric, and the head as an extension of what I do. I am not intimidated by hair as hair." He explained that he had been working at Bendel's, designing hats—which he often created directly on the models' heads—and had been discovered there by Jean Louis David, the famous French hairdresser. "Jean Louis saw something in me," Bob said. "A completely different set of eyes—unaffected. He was inquisitive as to my means and ways. For instance, I used forks as curling irons. I saw a fork as a conductor of heat. I flattened several forks with a hammer and spray-painted them different colors. Jean Louis noticed that. When I told him what I did, he said, 'You are a hairdresser.' I had no aspiration to be a hairdresser. Without realizing it, I already was one."

Bob served an apprenticeship at a salon in Paris, and worked for Jean Louis David for three and a half years, during which time his credit read "Bob Recine for Jean Louis David for Henri Bendel." When he went into business for himself, he became simply Recine. The reason that some hairdressers prefer to be known by only one name has to do with their perceiving themselves as artists, he told us. "Hairdressers were originally artists," he explained. "We need to be thought of in a singular fashion, like Dali and Picasso."

Recine's signature is oil. "When you see hair completely drenched, that's me," he said. He has another signature, too, which is hair in a bunch. He opened his book to a picture of a woman whose hair was deliberately snarled. "I achieved this with sugar water," he said, pointing to the snarls. "Sugar water has been the original setting for hair since Egyptian times. I use it to whack hair up—to make it beautiful for the camera. It crystallizes, like ice. The camera loves it." He turned to a picture of a woman on a beach, her hair blowing around her head. "Another thing I do is stuffing hair," he said. "This is her hair." He pointed to the wisps around her face. "This is mine." He indicated the strands at her nape. Another picture showed a woman whose hair was piled on top of her head in a cone shape and crimped into a zigzag pattern. "This is me working with my fingers," he said, pointing to the zigzags. "The silhouette of this chignon, the shape, is classic, but the quality—it's erratic in design. I'm achieving an erratic nature in a very angelic form." He flipped to a page where women with tangled manes of hair were trying to strangle each other, and observed, "Of course, sometimes I have to be very bad, and not good."

Recine opened his shop in Chelsea about a year ago, to give himself a base in New York and to train other hairdressers. "I designed the whole shop along the lines of how I perceive what I do," he said. "As a hairdresser, I am image-oriented rather than typical. We're beautification-oriented. We're interested in *how* things are done. The whole process determines how you feel about it. Otherwise, you end up with utensils, chemicals—it's a detour from beauty." Many of the innovations at Recine New York have their origins in the unusual conditions under which Bob has done hair. "I have done hair on a stool in the desert," he said. "I don't think you have to sit in a beauty chair to have this kind of service." Instead of beauty-salon chairs and those chairs with dryers attached to the backs—the ones that look like primitive electric chairs—Recine New York provides elegant dining-room chairs upholstered in faux leopardskin. Antique gilt-framed mirrors are mounted on the already mirrored walls, and other antique mirrors stand here and there, breaking up the reflections, so that instead of seeing yourself recede, smaller and smaller, into infinity, as you do from most beauty-salon chairs, you can watch Vincent, a hairdresser who has a beard but no mustache on one side of his face, and a mustache but no beard on the other, ricocheting off the other hairdressers' clients as he crosses the room. And Recine New York doesn't smell like a beauty salon—like the chemicals used in hair dyes and permanents. It smells like the incense that Veronica burns, or the potpourri set out at the shampoo station, or the mysterious mixture of herbs and oils that Vincent, who is of Mexican descent, uses in a special Aztec treatment. "We use a lot of natural products," Bob said as we watched Vincent slathering a client's hair with something that looked like pesto but smelled like fruit. "We use coffee for strength and color. Brilliantine, a mineral-based oil. Aloe—anything you can use on your skin you can use on your hair. We do a lot with massage, with aromatherapy treatments."

The formula for the Aztec treatment, which is the ultimate Recine experience, has been handed down in Vincent's family since the time of Montezuma and is a closely guarded secret at Recine—by everyone except Vincent, who cracked under questioning. Besides aloe, that day's batch contained garlic, peel from a green (underripe) lemon, jojoba bean, which Vincent's mother sends him from the Mojave Desert, and oil of peach, which was the scent we had found so hard to place. When Vincent had massaged the client's scalp thoroughly with this mixture ("It's a scalp treatment, really," Bob said, "to harden hair"), he wound a turban of plastic wrap around the client's head and then applied the finishing touch—a heating cap trimmed with black ostrich feathers. Like everything else in the shop, the heating cap was designed by Bob, to beautify the beautification process. "Oil is activated by heat," he explained. "Most heating caps are made of blue plastic. When you use a tool that's not beautiful, it's not working. But you sit in my shop with something attractive." He regarded the client with satisfaction and said, "She's in a very good moment."



"My scoop-back tank comes in Mango, Morning Glory, and Scallion. Don's Maori surfers are available in Iris, Mustard, and Prawn."

Incentives

THE smile on a child's face, the thanks of a wounded soldier, the knowledge that something we wrote prevented the earth from being destroyed by a comet—these private rewards have always been enough for us. Sure, we make a lot of money. But nobody crawls into a burning building or dangles from a helicopter's whirling rotor for a paycheck alone. The truth is, we enjoy what we do. So it was with a certain degree of detachment that we recently attended the fifty-third annual Premium Incentive Show, at the Javits Center.

An incentive, in the Javitsian sense, is something a company gives to a person in the hope of turning that person into a better customer, distributor, employee, or whatever. It is a carrot. The Christmas-tree-shaped piece of air-freshener-impregnated cardboard that you find hanging from your rear-view mirror after an oil change is an incentive. So is a free trip to Hawaii, a humorous cigarette lighter, or an Oscar. The purpose of the Premium Incentive Show is to bring together buyers and sellers of incentives from all over the world and thereby facilitate their buying and selling.

For people at the Premium Incentive Show, incentives can themselves be incentives. For that reason, many exhibitors handed out free samples. Here is an inventory of the incentives we acquired during several hours of wandering around: an imprinted ballpoint pen, given to us by a representative of a ballpoint-pen-imprinting company; two jelly beans; a red paper plate that had been cut into a devil-shaped hat; a token made of a yellowish alloy called Goldine; a copy of the most recent issue of *Incentive*, in which we read about a nine-year-old girl whose sneakers, in a contest sponsored by the manufacturer of Odor-Eaters insoles, had been judged "the foulest pair in America" and had then been encased in a plastic box for display at various shopping malls; a small plastic coin-stacking device that cures a copyrighted ailment known as Coin-Wrap-A-Phobia; and a pink plastic tube called a Boink, intended for stress relief.

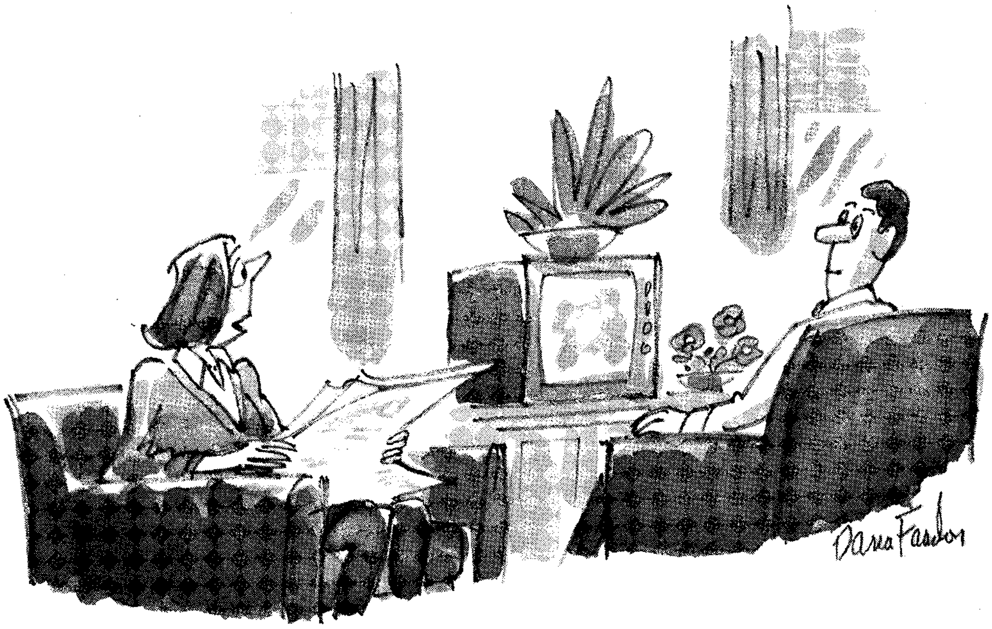
The incentives we received paint a distorted picture of the Premium Incentive Show. Most of the incentives displayed in the booths were things like hammocks, electric saws, golf shoes, and binoculars. For some reason, though, no one was giving those things away. The closest we came to getting something pretty expensive was when a guy representing a company called Nada-Concepts, Inc., saw us looking at his product—the Back-Up (formerly called the Nada-Chair), which is not a chair but, rather, a portable back-support system that loops around a sitting person's knees—and said, "O.K., I'm going to give you something." We thought he was going to give us a Back-Up, which is made of padded polyester and retails for forty bucks. Instead, he handed us a Paperback'r, which is a disposable paper version of the Back-Up and costs about a millionth of a cent. A Paperback'r, in our view, is a disincentive. We gave the guy a penetrating look and moved on.

One incentive we desperately wanted was a small laser that looked like a pen. It was called a Laser Pen. Three Laser Pens were displayed on a table at the Applied Laser Systems booth, and we picked up one and aimed it at a brochure. A thin beam of rich red light made a bright dot on a single word in a sentence describing the Laser Pen as "an asset to any professional who has pointing needs." We thought about dropping the Laser Pen into our pocket and, if we were caught, pretending to have believed that it was a sample. Then a representative of Applied Laser Systems gave *us* a penetrating look. After a brief interior struggle we put the Laser Pen down and walked away.

A little later, we stopped at the Bottle-It booth. A Bottle-It is a funnel-like plastic sleeve that you can snap onto the top of an aluminum beverage can, turning it into a bottle. There are a couple of reasons you might want to do that: (1) the top of a beverage can is usually pretty dirty; (2) when you drink from a beverage can, some of the beverage sometimes collects on the top, creating the potential of spillage. There are also a couple of reasons you might not want to bother: (1) unless you clean the dirty top of a beverage can, it remains dirty whether it has a Bottle-It on it or not; (2) the beverage that collects on the top of a beverage can during drinking will still collect, and it will spill when you take the Bottle-It off. We wouldn't have mentioned either of these problems except that Betsy Ross, a leading Bottle-It distributor and an aunt of Bottle-It's inventor, didn't offer us an incentive of any kind.

A couple of booths away from Bottle-It we found the booth of the Valley Forge Flag Company. We couldn't believe what a coincidence that was, so we asked the Valley Forge representatives if they knew there was a woman named Betsy Ross just a couple of booths away. The Valley Forge representatives looked extremely interested. One of them said, "Really? Betsy Ross?" Then we took a closer look at the faces of the Valley Forge representatives, and realized that they were sort of laughing, and that they didn't care one tiny bit about Betsy Ross. Our face fell. One of the Valley Forge representatives must have noticed, because he handed us a small flag commemorating the Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee, and said, "You'll be looking good. You'll be looking like a flag guy." We sheepishly took the flag and a copy of a Valley Forge bulletin (from which we learned that if a new star is ever added to the American flag all the stars will be rearranged in a pattern that will be determined by the President of the United States with the help of a branch of the Army called the Institute of Heraldry), and went away.

When we got home, we looked around our apartment and realized that many of the things we own are similar, if not identical, to a lot of the really great incentives we saw at the Premium Incentive Show. We own a telephone; there were telephones at the show. We own a toaster oven; ditto. Likewise with our TV set, stereo, camera, floating-cube optical-illusion coin bank, and so on. In other words, without realizing it we have spent our entire life surrounded by powerful incentives. Could it be that they are the secret of our success?



"Where did all the money that no one seems to have go?"

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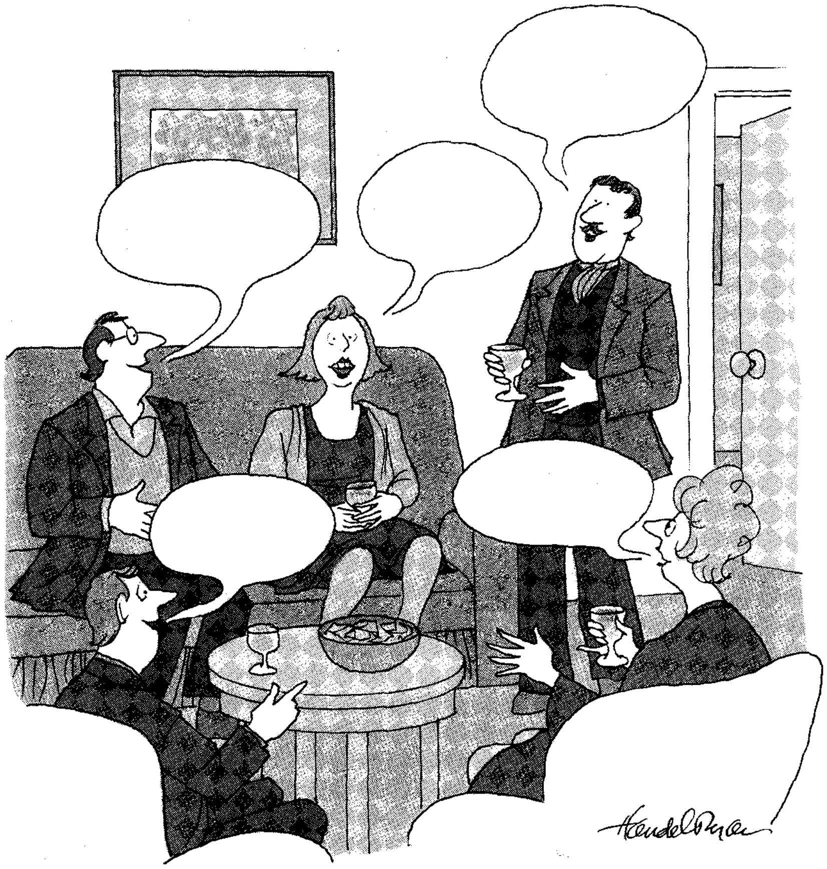
YOU'LL NEVER EAT LUNCH ON THIS CONTINENT AGAIN

Angiosperms (flowering plants) first evolved toward the end of the dinosaurs' reign. Many of these plants contain psychoactive agents, avoided by mammals today as a result of their bitter taste. Dinosaurs had neither means to taste the bitterness nor livers effective enough to detoxify the substances.—*Stephen Jay Gould.*

Scientists poking through volcanic rubble in the mountains of Antarctica have stumbled upon the 200 million-year-old remains of dinosaurs, marking the first time the extinct beasts have been found so far south. . . .The scientists said they think they have found the remains of at least two different dinosaurs, and said the fossils may be a snapshot of a drama of death played out 200 million years ago, when Antarctica was warm, mild and part of the Southern super-continent known as Gondwanaland.—*The Washington Post.*

Here's my theory, she thought, we *are* the missing link. We are halfway between our animal selves and wherever it is that we're going. . . . Besides, we need our space. The soul was invented as an arbiter between the two, and drugs can be very helpful in spiritual and territorial terms.—*Julia Phillips.*

MOSTLY, she blamed the mammals. She watched herself watching her talons dry in the sun and all the news washed over her—a litany of chaos, lies, and despair. Am I the only one who can't tell them apart, she wondered. For a while she had thought, O.K., the new game, and she had tried to keep up with all the varieties: lemurs, lorises, shrews, some of them swinging and some of them climbing but really all the same—the chattering, the placentas, the four-chambered hearts. She could never flash on this sleeping thing they did. What was it? A counter to that restless scheming and humping all day long? They were everywhere on the West Coast now, with their fuzzy little coats, and their big night-seeing eyes, and the thumbs. Those opposable thumbs! Her group, out on the beach, used to have such contempt for the mammals, the way they scurried around on the floor. "Hey, squashed another furball," Stego would say, stamping down with his beautiful, muscular, to-die-for back foot when they were all in a circle, weekending around La Brea, flowered out, and he wouldn't even bother to look back and see what kind he had put out of its nipple-sucking misery. To imagine these things taking over the Coast. No way on earth. Not in a million years.



Running on Empty

Which is about what it had taken. She knew what they said about her—that it was the flowers, as simple as that. Yeah, right. As though she hadn't always had this spiritual striving to get out-of-bodied on the whole incredible scene and view it from high up. From a safe distance, whatever that was. No, it was the mammals who had driven her away. Creatures that young weren't as spiritual as her crowd had been. Creatures that young were afraid to be alone—they eschewed eccentricity. It was all part of the larger picture: the diminished vision, the bankrupt dreams.

None of it had ever been about continental domination or territory, not for her, anyway—she was always telling that to the other big lizards. The territorialism, the bellowing around the tar pits, the aggressive predation—that hadn't meant anything at all to her. It had been another game for her, a spiritual game—that old notion, held over from her infancy, that if she moved fast enough she would survive extinction. That they would *all* survive extinction. "Hell of a belief for a cold-blooded creature," Stego had said, squinting at her with his funny little double-lidded eyes. Which was true, God knows. There was always something cosmic about Stego. Maybe a little *too* cosmic. She blamed him a lot, too.

The game, the way she had learned it, had been species extension. How long have you been on earth? How long can you stay here? Macho boy-lizard *penis-extension stuff*, O.K., but she had been the first girl lizard in it. They had dreams, her kind: they saw the world as a majestic, single-file parade of major creatures—creatures who took millions of years of development, *classic* creatures. Now, with the mammals in charge, there was nothing worth a second look; it was all just spinoffs and syndication. "Speciation"—that was their code word for it, meaning just more mammals with minor, half-assed spins on the same basic, dumb, low-budget, tree-climbing, milk-sucking idea. Branching. Variation. Scads of shrewlike creatures running around humping, producing their own sequels.

"*As you were.*"

The boasting! "See that four-footed feline?" you could hear them saying to each other down there in the valley. "Give him a development deal and a few thousand generations, and, I promise you, you're looking at a major, major predator." Some of her old group had "adapted"—that was their word for it. Take the twelve-step program, be a good lizard, begin to change: in a few generations your scales become feathers, and your ten rows of razor teeth a dainty little beak, and off you go, flying to your new little nest. But then what were you? *Who* were you? One more cunning little creature with a development deal and a "niche" in the "ecology." When you used to rule the earth.

One of the lemurs had explained the new deal-making to her, working his thumbs like mad. (Nervous, they were always so nervous around her. It was that spiritual thing she still had, she guessed.) "Punctuated equilibrium," that was the jargon for it. Wait around, make variations, keep the bottom line low. Then, when there's a crack in the old order, grab your chance. "You get in on the back end, and then you have moments. Adapt or die, baby." Then he had given her a lecture on what makes a great species, a hit species. As though her kind hadn't been walking the earth for—oh, what was it, sixty million years? Fifty million years? The flowers cut down on your memory. "It's adaptability that matters," he said. A few years later, that sucker got blown away by one of the last remaining pterodactyls with night vision. Adapt or die. Right.

"Too dumb to taste the bitterness." That was what she knew the furballs told each other under their breaths, exchanging those wizened, knowing little toothy grins. Seeing her kind reeling around with that wild blissed-out look you got after a really righteous flower. Hey, that's right, furball. Ever felt a thousand flowers exploding like pinwheels inside your consciousness, rushing down there to the brain at the base of your spine and letting loose?

Dumb, her kind were dumb. "Stego's got a brain the size of a walnut, in the base of his spine." "The bronto's got a brain the size of a navel orange." As if their cranial capacity weren't exactly right for animals of their size. And they had no idea what a joy it had once been—the heaven-shaking sound as we met to intertwine necks and pound the ground and roar. Hey, ever wonder why they called us thunder lizards? *We ruled the effing earth.*

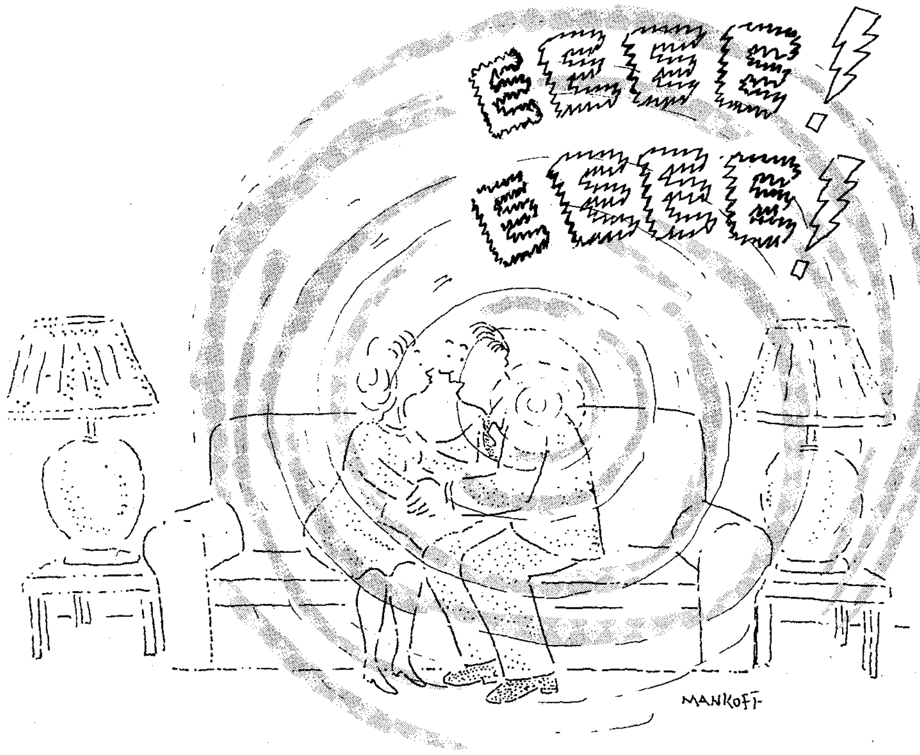
The mammals, really, had driven her to the flowers. She remembers the first time the weird-looking lizard with the crooked grin and all the plates up and down his muscular back showed her how to extract the pollen. "Don't suck it so hard," he said softly. "Hold the pollen in your teeth and let it out slowly through your nose." Hey, just a minute, plate-face. Who do you think you're dealing with here? But she went along with him anyway. Oh, baaaby, baaaby. She even wondered briefly if this was going to be the Big One. The Ultimate. Death. Extinction. The Fate of all Living Things. But it had kept on and on, like a glimpse of eternity held in your hand.

Yeah, right. Too dumb to taste the bitterness.

SHE had taken a meeting with one of them in the middle of her most intense period. Her high period. One of the little thumbsters she had seen once or twice around the flower beds at La Brea back when it was still thrilling to be young and twenty feet high and cold-blooded and living in California. She was burning the residue from one of those big sunflowers, angiospermed-out, when this primate from the old days comes to call, running up the side of a palm tree and nestling by her ear. "Hey, my lady," he says, panting the way they do.

"Hey, furball," she said. "Long time no speak." A put-down once. Now you could call them hairball, fuzzette, body heat. They didn't care. They had the upper hand.

"Yeah, well, not because your name doesn't come up from time to time among us all." (Right—as in, That bitch still alive?) "I'll get right to the point." Busy, busy little mammal. Places to go, other mammals to hump. She hears that now they're starting to do it face to face. *Yuck.* "Listen, down there on the floor a lot of us are asking, 'Is this really a happy lady?' And I'm hearing—what I'm hearing is no, not really. So a lot of us were thinking, What about a partnership? A start-up situation. You know, co-production. You dominate the high


BEEP!
BEEP!
MANKOFF

"Damn! I forgot to disconnect my personal alarm system."

ground, we take the jungle floor. Hey—you'll still be an independent entity, only within this *larger* entity. Together we could dominate this continent for a major, major time frame."

She nods slowly. She shows more enthusiasm for this concept than she really feels. What they want is she should sell out everything her kind had believed in for millennia—sell out her birthright—and she isn't even supposed to feel the pain. Isn't even supposed to recognize that there *is* any pain. Just one entity within a larger entity. This was the new epoch for you: absolute corruption without a single identifiable moment of compromise.

"Yeah, what do you take out of the front end?" she asks, shutting her first, translucent lids. Which always freaks them out, the mammals—that tearlike, semi-opaque lid dropping down in the middle of their pitch. Hey, they think, the panic growing in their heaving little chests. She could turn. One bite from those monster jaws and I'm an article in *Natural History*.

"There's just one condition," the furball says, scampering back down the branch. "Just don't embarrass us in public, you know." That injured innocence all of them have. He laughs. Looks more feral than ever. Jagged, yellowing teeth emphasizing all the molelike aspects of his demeanor. Chewing on sugarcane, probably. She recalled what Stego had said when they first started noticing them. "No matter how big the cranial capacity, remember what they were when they started out. *Moles.* You can't let them ever forget it."

But she just goes on with her flower. "Hey, you want some?" She offers to blow some pollen his way. The perfect hostess.

Oh, that sends the little fucker scurrying. "Hey, no. I mean—you know, it tastes . . . " He cuts himself off. Blushing, the way they do—all the hot blood pumping up in their arteries toward their lying little faces.

SHE blames her mother, too. She had always made her think that it could just go on. Her mother had forced all this girl-lizard thing on her—this dainty, chewing-the-palm-leaves thing. And when she was young, and lit by some inner ambition, she played along with it. But her mother had screwed her up in her relationships with all the other women. So was it any surprise that the last straw for her had been when the furball pointed out that little dopey simian swinging its arms, and said, "See that one? Lucy, they call her. Unlimited potential. Give her a thousand generations, she'll be walking erect, using tools, making deals. She could become the hottest thing on earth since—well, since you, my lady." That had cut it. Another woman, like herself. Thanks, Mom.

So head south, young female. The babe from the Antarctic Commission said that they were desperate for production, for any kind of creatures at all, and with the land bridge it was just a couple of long days' walks away. She had taken the plate-back along with her, for the sex mostly, though he was good company in a kind of lowriding, grungeball way. There would be plenty of empty space down there, and no mammals, just a lot of weird, retro-looking birds. Black and white, all black and white—kind of an art-house look, she guessed.

On the way south, she lies under the stars, awake in the middle of the night, unable to think anything but "I am going to die, he is going to die." Staring numbly at the stars, knowing that she is but a speck of sand under the fingernail of a larger being who is but a speck of sand under the fingernail of a larger being. Et cetera, et cetera, as they used to say when things just went on forever and her kind ruled the earth. Old plate-back tosses and turns while she looks at the stars. He hasn't eaten all day.

They were in business together. Go out, get some out-of-country money. Maybe those penguins liked basic action-adventure, monosyllable grunt stuff. That was usually big in the foreign markets—a couple of monster lizards writhing around and biting at each other. O.K., she could do that. Hey, she was adapting, wasn't she? She had been clean for a couple of weeks, and they were in business together. Plate-back rolls over, his stomach grumbles, and she almost likes him. Hey, they have a working relationship, they have an understanding, they have a deal. You could live with it. Just don't ask why.

—ADAM GOPNIK

WORLD OF TROUBLE

MARY MONTROSE held the so-called widow's seat on the Grafton town council. Before Mary the seat had been held for years by Dorothy Frails, whose husband had been electrocuted while doing what he thought was going to be simple wiring on their back porch. And the one before Dorothy Frails was also supposed to have been a widow, but not very many people remembered who that was or how she lost her husband. (It was Susan Jewell, whose husband, Howard, took a nap in the attic, surrounded by the jars of his jar collection, and never woke up, on October 4, 1962.) Mary Montrose was in her ninth year on the council. She considered dog issues her specialty, and once, at a convention in Moline, had given a slide presentation called "Muzzles: What They Can Do—and What They Can't."

Mary had two daughters—June Green, who lived in Colorado Springs, and Louise Darling, who lived in a farmhouse outside of Grafton and had been divorced for about three weeks. Louise's husband, Tiny, had moved out many months before, and the main effect of the divorce on Louise was that she found herself unable to watch television in a satisfying way. She could not settle into a show; she had to keep going from station to station. Not having a remote control had never bothered her, but now it really bothered her, and as soon as a question that she could not answer came on "Jeopardy," for example, she would guess blindly—"Fiji? What is the Island of Fiji?"—and change the channel to one of those phony crime shows. And she wouldn't watch very much of that, either.

One Sunday Louise drove into Grafton to see her mother. She had a sack of groceries on the seat beside her, the blacktop was mostly empty, and the radio station played three Evelyn "Champagne" King songs. Mary lived on the west side of town in an L-shaped green house with white shutters that did not shut. As Louise pulled in the driveway she noticed an orange plastic bucket on the ground by the willow tree. She got out of the car and went up the sidewalk, singing one of the Evelyn "Champagne" King songs she had just heard. "Get loose," she sang. "Get funky tonight."

Louise went in the front door and down the hall, and just as she entered the living room the sun filled it with green light—green because of the curtains. Louise shifted the groceries from one arm to the other. "I'm going to make you spaghetti bake," she said.

Mary Montrose lay on the davenport, reading some huge spy book. She marked her place with the jacket flap and sat up. She was tall and long-boned, with silver-gray hair held back by a network of barrettes.

"Well, I thought I heard somebody in the driveway," she said.

"What are you reading?" said Louise.

"I took it out from the library," said Mary. "Paula said it was a good book to read. But I don't know. There's an awful lot of killing. They just killed a group of people at a picnic."

"That's no good," said Louise. She carried the groceries out to the kitchen and put them on the counter. There was vodka in the freezer, and she made herself a vodka and cranberry juice, and returned to the living room.

"Pretty drink," said Mary.

"It's called a Twister," said Louise. "Would you like one?"

"You know," said Mary, "I wish I had a dress of that shade."

Louise took a drink. "You know what I wish?" she said. "That I was a rock singer. I really mean it. I wish that."

"You can carry a tune," said Mary.

"Maybe I should go on a concert tour," said Louise. "By the way, why is there a bucket in your yard?"

"There shouldn't be," said Mary. She got up and walked to the window. "Oh, look at that," she said. Then she checked the thermostat and came back to the davenport.

Louise sat down in the chair facing her mother. It was a recliner, and Louise reclined. She picked at the dark, star-shaped leaves growing along the arm of the chair. "Have you given any thought to cutting this back?" she said. "Look what it's doing to the arm of this chair. Look what it's doing to the davenport. I'm not saying to get rid of it. I'm saying get rid of some of it. Look at this. The arm of this chair is returning to the soil."

Mary looked sadly at the magnificent ivy plant, which began on the coffee table. "It would be too hard," she said.

"Oh, Christ," said Louise. "It would not, Mom. It would not. Do you want spaghetti bake, or what?"

"Well, before they all got killed, they were grilling hamburgers at this picnic," said Mary, "and it made me hungry for a hamburger on the grill. Why don't we run up to the lake and get a hamburger from the Lighthouse?"

"I can put hamburger in the spaghetti," Louise suggested.

"I never get out of here," said Mary. "I wouldn't think it would be the end of the world if we ran up to the lake. Your problem is you sit out at that farm and you get isolated. You do, you get isolated."

"I don't get isolated," said Louise.

"I don't know what else you'd call it," said Mary.

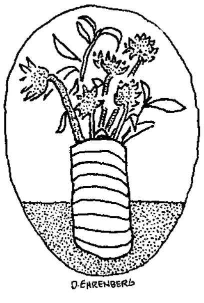
"How about . . . independent living?" said Louise.

"Besides," said Mary, "wouldn't you guess that sooner or later Jean Klar is going to get married and want to come back and live in that house? Sweetie, you're a renter. You rent."

"I know I rent," said Louise. "I'm aware of that."

"They have Jimmy Coates's house up for sale," said Mary. "They want eighty-five hundred dollars, and I'll bet you they would sell it for six thousand."

"The problem with Jimmy Coates's house is it would smell like Jimmy Coates," said Louise. "And I don't have six thousand dollars."



Mary sighed. She went to the front hall and retrieved a brightly shellacked walking stick. Louise brought her chair upright and finished her Twister. "Where'd you get that?" she said.

Mary handed the stick to Louise; it had a snake's features wood-burned into the handle. "Hans Cook," she said. She put on a maroon jacket and zipped it up to her chin. "He was bringing his truck back from Ohio and he stopped to see some caves. They had a museum, and little huts showing panoramas of Indian life."

Louise examined the stick. "What are you going to do with a cane? You run across the room when the phone rings."

"The phone doesn't ring," said Mary.

"I call you," said Louise. "Your constituents or whatever, they call you."

Mary paused in the doorway. "This is true," she said, "but I must say I get fewer calls since we had those dogs killed that lived by the dump."

Louise and her mother walked outside. Mary headed for the willow, speared the orange bucket with the walking stick, and tossed it over the hedge into Jack and Ranae Miller's yard.

"I thought that was your bucket," said Louise.

"No, I believe it's Jack's," said Mary.

THEY went up to Walleye Lake on Highway M-53. Louise's Vega made a huge racket. It had a piece of metal sticking out of the muffler. Louise knew this because she had got down on her hands and knees and looked, but that did not fix it. Summer was more than a month away, and the sky had an anxious pale color. Mary rode with one hand on the dashboard and the other on the edge of the seat. Louise stubbed out a cigarette in the ashtray.

"How is Hans Cook?" she said.

"Oh," said her mother, "Hans Cook is all right. But I'll tell you, we went to a movie in Stone City two, three weeks ago, and the way he laughed really embarrassed me. The movie was supposed to be funny. I know that. But you have to draw the line somewhere."

"What movie was this?" said Louise.

"Oh, with Carol Burnett," said Mary. " 'Annie.' I was about to crawl down the aisle and out the door. There again, I know he takes drugs."

"Oh, right," said Louise.

"Well, he takes LSD," said Mary.

Louise stared at her. "Hans Cook takes the drug LSD?" she said. "Big fat Hans?"

Mary pointed at the windshield. "Let's watch the highway," she said.

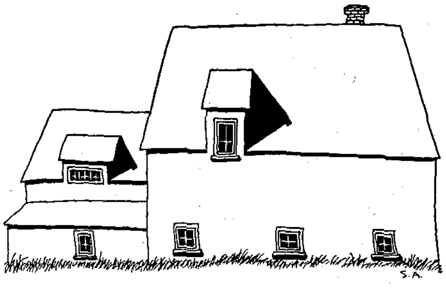
"I see it," said Louise. "Are you kidding me about Hans Cook?"

"His neck gives him trouble," said Mary. "He's always driving someplace, and he says his head kind of pushes down on his neck. He's not built right. He has an extra vertebra. He has something extra, anyway. Well, this is what he says. He claims the LSD makes his neck feel better."

"What does he take for a headache?" said Louise. "Crack?"

Mary took off her glasses and began to clean them with a tissue. The glasses had square lenses and dramatic arms, and Mary's eyes looked small and tired without them. "No, I don't think he takes crack," she said.

"Maybe he's been spiking your wine cooler," said Louise, and Mary didn't say anything, so Louise said, "Jesus Christ, you're not taking it, too."



Mary glanced at a windmill going by outside the window. "I don't doubt that Hans would give me some," she said. "But I wouldn't take any, and Hans knows this. The drug is paper. It would be like chewing a receipt from a store."

They drove into the town of Walleye Lake. A woman in a station wagon began to turn in front of them into the Hy-Vee store but slammed on the brake when Louise leaned into her horn.

"That's right, honey," said Louise. "I'm coming straight."

THE Lighthouse was across the street from the Moonview Inn in town. It was a drive-in restaurant built around a bleached-orange tower. A green neon tube circled the top of the tower, and the light was on although

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A BASKET OF CHESTNUTS

There's a shadow boost, a giddy strange assistance
That happens when you swing a loaded basket.
The lightness of the thing seems to diminish
The actual weight of what's being hoisted in it.

For a split second your hands feel unburdened,
Outstripped, dismayed, passed through.
Then just as unexpectedly comes rebound—
Downthrust and comeback ratifying you.

I recollect this basket full of chestnuts,
A really solid gather-up, all drag
And lustre, opulent and gravid
And golden-bowelled as a moneybag.

And I wish they could be painted, known for what
Pigment might see beyond them, what the reach
Of sense despairs of as it fails to reach it,
Especially the thwarted sense of touch.

Since the portrait painter walked out of our house
In the autumn of 1973,
A basketful of chestnuts shines between us,
One that he did not paint when he painted me—

Although it was what he thought he'd maybe use
As a decoy or a coffer for the light
He captured in the toe caps of my shoes.
But it wasn't in the picture and is not.

What's there is comeback, especially for him.
In oils and brushwork we are ratified.
And the basket shines and fox-fire chestnuts gleam
Where he passed through, unburdened and dismayed.

—SEAMUS HEANEY

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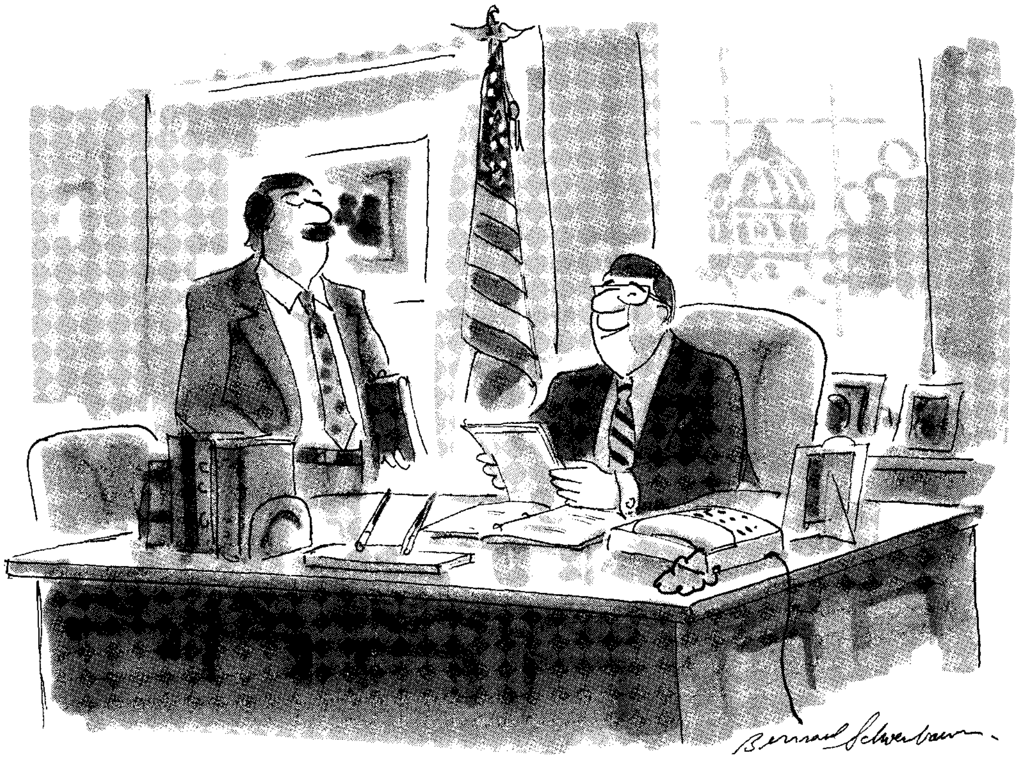


"Great. You've touched all the bases without getting bogged down in constitutionality."

it was not yet dark. In full season, waitresses in white sailor hats would circulate among the cars, but in the spring customers had to line up at the counter under the tower, and on this evening the line was long. Directly in front of Louise and Mary were a father and a little girl carrying a stuffed horse. The girl had powder-blue eyes and long brown hair. Mary said hello to her and asked the name of the horse.

"Can't touch this," said the girl. "Hammer time."

"Hammer, how ferocious," said Mary. "I used to have a horse, her name was Polly. That's right, a big old lady like me. I was chosen from all the girls in all the riding clubs to bring my horse Polly on opening day of the Iowa State Fair. I had white leather gloves that rode high on my arms, and who do you think was on the horse by my side? Well, it was Tim Thompson. He was the best barrel racer in the nation, and he was from California."

The father had turned to listen. He wore a cardigan sweater with a bowling pin on it, and had the same spooky eyes as his daughter. Together they reminded Louise of the kind of peaceful, doomed space aliens you might see on "Outer Limits." The girl chewed on the neck of the stuffed horse, then raised her head. "What's a barrel racer?" she said.

"That's someone who rides around barrels like they did in Western times," said Mary. "Anyway, this Tim Thompson—"

"Why did they ride around barrels?" said the girl.

"Sweetie, I guess they were in their way," said Mary. "But you can disregard the barrels. They really don't have much importance to the story. Anyway, everyone knew Tim Thompson. So we rode up the midway and onto the racetrack, and when we got to the grandstand Tim Thompson turned to me and said, 'Mary, you ride better than the women do in California. You ride much better than they do.' You see, he was tickled by my riding, and he said he was going to give me a present. But then the fair got going, and there was a rodeo that he had to be in, and he forgot about the present. Well, I didn't forget about the present, but I rode home in a dream anyway. The only other thing I'd ever done was walk beans. It was a long time later when a delivery boy brought a package to my dad's farm. This boy worked for Supersweet in town, and his name was Leon Felly, and he had freckles over his entire face. He gave me a cardboard box, and I opened it, and it was an ivy plant from Tim Thompson."

"Did you hear that?" said the father. "The lady got her present finally." He rubbed his forearm absently, and soon he turned his daughter and himself away from Mary.

"She has a crutch," the girl said.

Louise looked sideways at Mary. "That ivy is from your mother," she said.

Mary scowled. "What ivy?" she said. "You always just assume you know what I'm talking about. There's a big world of ivy out there, Louise. You've never seen the plant from Tim Thompson. It died that winter—the winter following the fall when I rode in the fair. It was one of the worst winters we ever had, and a big frost came and tore up all the hollyhocks and all the ivy, including the ivy that Tim Thompson gave me."

"He never gave you no kind of ivy," said Louise.

Mary laughed bitterly. "We walked out the windows onto snowdrifts that year," she said.

"You never walked out the windows," said Louise.

A commotion developed at the head of the line. The father picked up his daughter, and Mary and Louise stepped away from everyone to see. A customer shouted at the man behind the counter. The customer wore a red satin jacket, the back of which said "Geoff Lollard Schools of Self-Defense" in white flannel letters. He had a large head and a butch haircut, and he kept smacking the counter with his hand. The counterman was young and heavy, with a green apron, and a fearful smile stuck on his face.

"You're in a world of trouble, you smiling son of a bitch!" said the customer. "I know where you live! I know when closing time is! I know where you work! You work here! Stop smiling, God damn it! I'll cut you, so help me I will."

"Oh, Pete," said the counterman. He had a hollow, sad voice that seemed to rasp a nerve in the man in the red self-defense jacket. "Oh, now, Pete, settle down."

Pete kept cursing the counterman. He picked up a gleaming napkin dispenser and began stalking him down the length of the counter.

"You don't want to do this, Pete," said the counterman. Pete threw the dispenser viciously. The counterman dived, and the dispenser smashed a deep-fat-frier basket off its peg on the back wall.

The counterman got up. "Well, great, Pete, you cracked it," he said. "I hope you're pleased with yourself, because you really cracked it."

But Pete had already turned away, and now he tore through the line of customers, tilting his head and swearing at the sky. His features were delicately placed in the center of his big face, and he had a Band-Aid over his eye. As he passed Louise and Mary, he veered close, and his boot came down sideways on the butt of Mary's walking stick. The stick was pulled from Mary's hand, and she stepped backward into the blue-eyed father and daughter. Pete and the stick seemed to wrestle briefly before falling over on the asphalt. It was apparent that Pete had scraped the heels of his hands, and the people in the line gasped and touched the heels of their own hands protectively. Pete scrambled to his feet and began to run, as if the stick were after him. He made it to an orange Volkswagen bus under a herbicide billboard, and he got in and drove away.

"Do you want help?" said the man with blue eyes. His voice was restricted by his daughter's arms around his neck. "I guess he tried to steal some candy. My understanding is, he put a roll of candy in his pocket."

"Him and the other guy must know each other," said Louise.

"Oh, yeah!" said the man. "They have to know each other. I guess this Pete guy thought the other one would just play dumb while he made off with the candy."

Mary took a brush from her purse and passed it lightly over the sides of her hair. "So you think the guy in the red," she said, gesturing at the herbicide sign with the brush, "knew the cook beforehand?"

Louise took her cigarette case, unsnapped it, and bent to light a cigarette. "He just said he did, Ma," she said.

"Oh, yeah!" said the man. "No question but what they know each other. Ease up, honey. You're strangling Dad. I would definitely call 911 if I was that guy. I don't know why he isn't calling them right now. I would be, you bet."

"You know what, though," said Mary. "I'll bet that guy got away with the candy anyway."

The man nodded. "Pete did," he said.

"Well, wait," said Mary. "Pete, or the one in the red coat?"

"Pete is the one in the red coat," said the man.

"Pete got in the van," said Louise.

The man nodded. "That's exactly right," he said. "Pete got in the van."

"Be quiet!" said the little girl. She put her hand over her forehead. "I'm sick."

"You're fine," said the father.

"Put a Band-Aid on my eye," said the girl.

Louise and Mary ordered the California hamburgers, and French fries, and mugs of root beer. Louise gave the counterman a cigarette and reached across to light it for him. His fingers trembled as he formed a shield around Louise's lighter. Then he set out two red-and-white cardboard baskets for their fries. Louise and Mary ate their hamburgers in the car, returned the heavy glass mugs to the counter, and drove home to Mary's house. They watched a television show about murder, and Louise discovered a large flaw in the plot, and Mary had a glass of milk and sat on the davenport. During a commercial, Louise looked at the clock on the wall and turned to Mary.

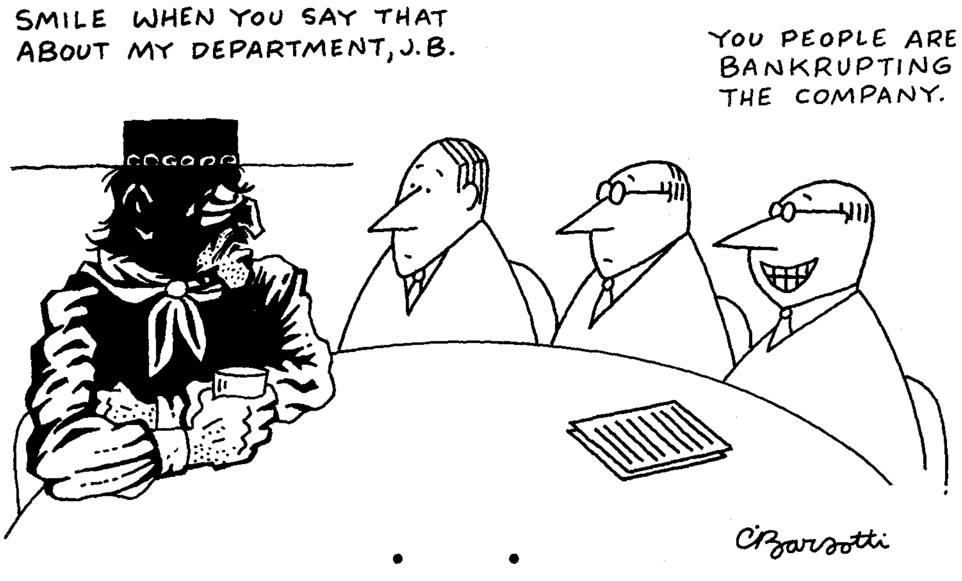
"Do you really think I'm that isolated?" she said.

Mary looked at her blankly, touched by something profound. She walked out to the hallway, then spoke to Louise from the dark.

"I didn't get home with my stick," she said.

"You know, Mark, your tabouli salad makes us look bad."

LOUISE worked at a photography studio in Stone City. On the Monday after she and her mother went to the Lighthouse, she helped the owner, Kleeborg, with high-school-graduation photos. Louise did the makeup, tilted the lights until Kleeborg said O.K., and put the film holders in his veiny hands. The day went normally except for one girl who did not look very promising from the start. She had short, straight yellow hair, but her eyes


SMILE WHEN YOU SAY THAT ABOUT MY DEPARTMENT, J.B.
YOU PEOPLE ARE BANKRUPTING THE COMPANY.
CBarsotti

were red and her collar crooked. She was supposed to have her portrait taken in the outdoor setting. This was in a corner of the studio and amounted to a section of rail fence with plastic leaves and an evergreen backdrop. While Louise was trying to get some Murine drops in the girl's eyes, she just hunkered down with her back to the fence and moaned.

"I don't want to go away to school," the girl said. A drop of Murine spilled from the corner of her eye and rolled down her cheek. "I don't want to go away to school. And I'm so hung over. I will never pick up another glass of wine in my life."

"Why is she on the floor?" shouted Kleeborg. He lifted the cloth from his head and stood beside the camera. "Your whole life is in front of you!" he said. He had been using this expression all week, but now it sounded like a threat. Louise helped the girl up, took her in the bathroom, and got her some Alka-Seltzer. The girl's name was Shauna Staley, and it turned out that she had been accepted at the University of Oregon, but she didn't want to go there and leave her boyfriend, Loren. But her mother, who hated Loren with a passion, had her mind set on Oregon and had gone as far as forging enthusiastic letters to the college and signing Shauna's name.

Shauna threw her head back and drank the water with the Alka-Seltzer. She set the glass on the toilet tank and, panting softly, said, "It's just that I don't want to go away to school."

Louise put an arm around her shoulders. "Maybe it wouldn't be so bad," she said.

They went out in the hallway. There was a brass bed nearby that had been used in advertisements for Brown's department store, and Shauna lay down upon it. Then she got up, went in the bathroom, and threw up. She came back drying her face with a towel and lay down again. "What ever made me think I could drink?" she said. "What ever, ever made me think I could drink?" Louise knew the kind of hangover the girl had—it helped to say things more than once. Soon Shauna fell asleep, and did not wake up until closing time, when she went out and bicycled slowly away.

ON Wednesday night after work, Louise drove over to Walleye Lake to pick up her mother's walking stick, which someone at the Lighthouse had leaned against the counter near the lost-and-found shelf. The stick was ugly to Louise, and she dropped it in the back of the car and buried it with old newspapers. She decided to drive by the lake on her way out of town. The street to the water was narrow and flanked by bars, a barbershop, a small park, and a consignment store with a broken window. Some old men in fishing caps looked up, and one of them waved at the sound of Louise's car, and Louise got the impression that he was toothless, although she did not get that good a look.

She parked and walked down Town Beach. The water was choppy and gray, and Louise's hair swirled around her face. She stopped at the edge of the water to wash her hands. The lake was sparse and fierce-looking, like a place where TV scientists would go to find blind fish from the beginning of time. The sand was covered with black weeds and thousands of tiny gray rocks. Up the beach, someone called her name and waved from the corner of the stone picnic shelter. It was Johnny White, who had graduated with Louise from Morrisville-Wylie High School in 1974.

Louise had seen him once in a great while since then. Once she saw him at a car wash, wrestling a towel from a coin machine. Once she saw him sitting on a bench in Grafton with a large black Afghan dog. She and Johnny had dated in high school. She remembered watching from the bleachers as he performed in the class play, a musical about labor conflict in California. He sang a ballad called "Peaches (Find Me a Girl)." He flung his strong arms wide. *Peaches! Peaches! These two arms grow weary of peaches.* Louise had drunk some Wild Irish Rose before the play, and she remembered thinking that she didn't know anyone else with the sheer guts to get up and sing that song. Johnny sang in a smooth tenor voice that sounded very false to Louise, but somehow that did not take away from the accomplishment. Now Johnny worked for the county, and he was wearing a knee-length denim coat over a green shirt and green pair of pants. When he was in high school his face had had a round kind of appeal, but now he looked heavy, and on his head he wore one of those puffy leather caps that rock stars wear when they go bald. But his eyes still had the good-looking light they used to have.

Louise and Johnny sat under the wooden rafters of the picnic shelter. It turned out that Johnny lived these days in the former First Baptist Church in Pinnville. Pinnville was a group of houses on a back road between Grafton and Morrisville. The church had been purchased from the Baptists by Johnny's father, a wheeler-dealer farmer who was often said to be "rich on paper."

"Dad was going to make it a supper club," said Johnny. "It could still happen. Probably not, though. He just bought a Quonset full of auger parts from a guy in Sioux City. He thought he could turn them over fast. But there's something wrong with them, I'm not sure what. I think they might be impounded."

"Huh," said Louise.

"It's like when I went to Cleveland," said Johnny. "This was after Lisa and I had been married one year. We rented her uncle's house on Whimbel Avenue in Cleveland, and we started a restaurant on East Superior. We took a Sinclair station and converted it into a restaurant. But they put out the word on us. They said our hot dogs tasted like gasoline."

"Did I hear something about this?" said Louise. "Was there an explosion or something?"

"There wasn't any explosion," said Johnny. "There wasn't even any gasoline by that time. We had emptied out the tanks, and the man from the county came down and *watched* us empty out the tanks. But we were ruined by this gas rumor, because hot dogs were the mainstay of the restaurant, hot dogs and franks."

"I'm sorry," said Louise.

"If we hadn't gone bankrupt I bet Lisa and me would still be married," said Johnny. "Once I accidentally put my hand on the grill, and she just watched. You can't really see the scar in this light. Wait. Here it is. It's sort of like the whole hand is a scar. I don't know. We have two kids, Megan and Stefan, and I will say I miss those God-damned kids."

"They stayed in Cleveland?" said Louise.

"Well, Parma," said Johnny. "Same thing."

Louise and Johnny talked for a while longer, and then Louise left him sitting under the picnic shelter and walked to her car. Leaving Walleye Lake, Louise turned on the radio. Johnny Cash was on, singing about an autoworker who built himself a car out of parts he had smuggled out of the factory over a period of many years.

The lighter popped out, and Louise put a cigarette in her mouth. She looked at the orange ring of the lighter. "Give me that car," she said.

YOU WEREN'T CRAZY AND YOU WEREN'T DEAD

Four neat sonnets ago we were twenty.
You weren't crazy and you weren't dead.
We still counted ourselves four girlfriends
who'd gone to Radcliffe from the Bronx.

Later, nervous elegies, those four boxy
sonnets, emerged from my stunned hand.
I didn't have the courage to write them to you,
but to your parents, survivors again.

Your name in the synagogue's blue glass window
panel always makes me cry and in the film
over my eyes I collect square Polaroids
of Purim costumes, graduations, day camps,

the mean permutations of the cubic friendship:
who was whose best friend, who telling secrets
to whom, who prettiest, smartest, the showoff, the bore.
A story of small, sorry memories.

The year after you killed yourself
the rest of us took a four-bedroom apartment.
The fourth was always changing owners.
We mentioned your name from time to time.

Your brother named his baby girl for you.
He seemed to leave the names of those others lost
in the war in the war.
I try to find comfort in this birth, this life,

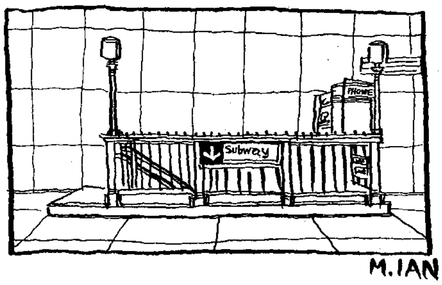
the odd fact of another child with this name.
And, astonished that we have grown up, become mothers
five times over among the three of us,
the old numbers jumbled somehow and you

somehow gone out, away, or stayed behind,
I find the image of another, still young
Emily toddling into warped rooms all wrong.
Who will forgive her for what you did?

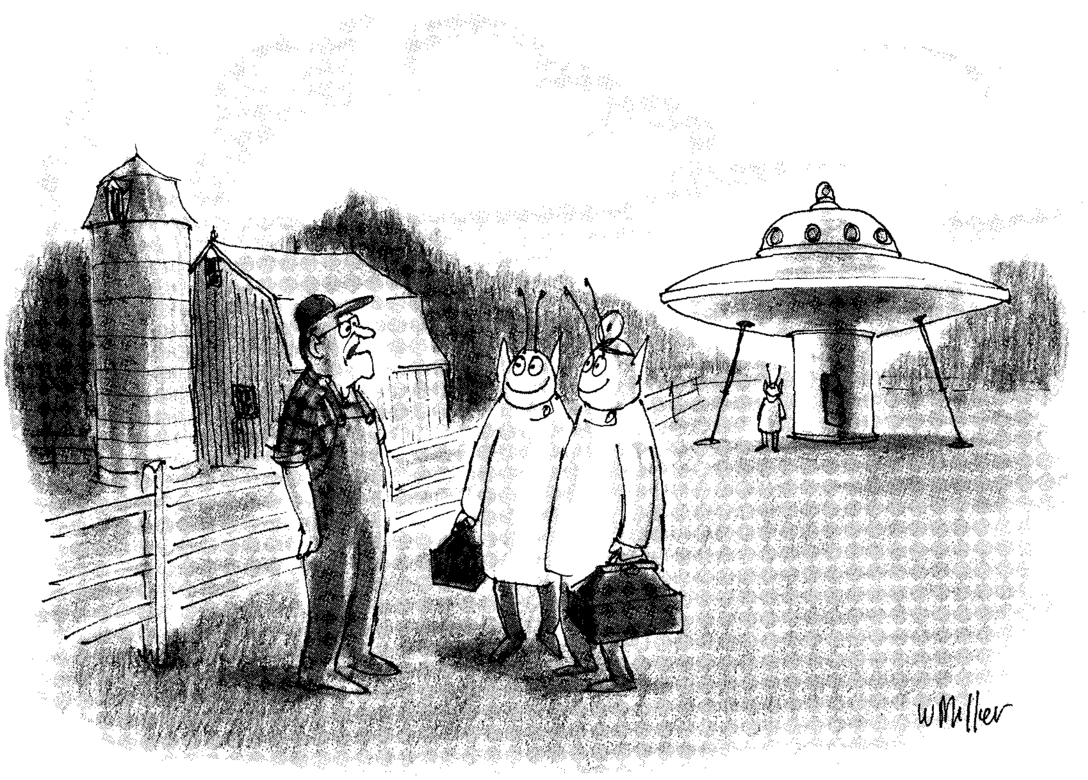
—Judith Baumel

• •

THE town council met in the lunchroom of the former Grafton elementary school, which had been built out of brick in 1916 and vacant since 1979, when the Grafton school merged with Morrisville-Wylie. The official name of the resulting school district was Morrisville-Wylie-Grafton, but that was too long, and although people suggested taking some of the first several letters from each town and calling the district Mo-Wy-Gra, this was plainly foolish, and so the district went on being Morrisville-Wylie, as if Grafton had floated off the map. Louise, who attended the meeting in order to return her mother's walking stick, came in just as four firemen were finishing a request for new axes. They had brought some of the old ones along to show their decrepit condition, but the council said to wait until the state money came in, to which Chief Howard LaMott said, "What state money? There is no state money. I've been chief four years now, and there's never been a penny of state money," and the four firemen picked up their axes and left, looking dismayed enough to go out and chop something down.



Louise watched them go, and noticed Hans Cook sitting two rows back. The chairs were small, especially compared with Hans. He wore a red Tyrolean hat and he was smoking a Tiparillo, the ash of which he now tipped into the cuff of his gray pants. He seemed to be rocking slightly in his chair. Next up was the issue of Alvin Getty's dog biting Nan Jewell. Nan Jewell was a good eighty years



"Orbistic medicine? You treat whole planets? I never heard of such a thing."

old, and she made her way to the front of the room wearing a dark-blue dress with a white lace collar—a beautiful dress, a dress a Jewell would wear. Alvin Getty stood among the chairs with his German shepherd, King, on a leash. King wore a red handkerchief, kept his head down, and moved a chair around with his tail.

"King is not a bad dog," said Alvin Getty. "He bit you the one time. Now, you were in his garden. That makes no difference to me. But he's a dog. Wrong, yes it was wrong. This is why I'm willing to do what I've been saying all night, which is, build a great big cage and stick him in it."

"That's no garden," said Nan Jewell. "It's a vacant lot *strewn* with tires. I hardly think I would be walking in such a mess. I walk down the middle of the sidewalk, because if I don't, I could get dizzy and fall. And this is well known."

"You show me a tire on that property and I will swallow it whole," said Alvin Getty.

Hans Cook laughed heartily. Louise's mother stood. She wore a black turtleneck and a green jumper with large pockets. "Thank you," she said. "There's only one thing you can do with a German shepherd who bites, and I don't think it's any secret. The idea of a cage does not impress me. Jaspersons' dog was supposedly kept in a cage, and we know how that turned out. Looking at King here tonight with his pretty scarf, naturally we all want to scratch his head. But I say put him to sleep. Who's with me?"

"Wait," said Alvin. "I have a witness. Mrs. Spees owns the pet store in Stone City. And that store has a good selection, too. Go ahead, Mrs. Spees."

But before Mrs. Spees could begin, Louise stood and raised her hand.

"What is it, honey?" said Mary.

"The floor yields to Louise Montrose," said Alvin Getty.

"Darling," said Louise. "It's Louise Darling. Mom, I got your stick back from the lake."

"Oh, thank you," said Mary. "If you put it by the door, that will be fine. That's my walking stick, everybody."

"I have something to say about the topic," said Louise. "I think you should give the cage a try. I don't think Jaspersons' dog is a fair comparison, because they never made a sincere effort."

"Thank you for your opinion," said Mary. "Nobody wishes a cage would work more than I do."

Louise went home and had spaghetti and mushrooms for supper. She took a bath, turned on the TV that was perched on her dresser, and got in bed. The wind came up, and seemed to lift the windows in their frames. Louise fell asleep and dreamed that ivy was growing over the top of her. When she awoke, it was that late hour in which they play the strangest commercials. Here was one for a 900 number you could dial in order to talk to people with serious illnesses. On the screen a beautiful young woman sat wrapped in a blanket, with a telephone in her lap. Louise got up and turned off the TV. She got back in bed. The wind blew, the house made one of its mysterious cracking sounds, and the phone rang.

"I've been trying to sleep," said her mother. "I can't sleep, and it's your fault. I know I've made mistakes, but please tell me what compels you to stand up in front of people and say I'm wrong."

"Well," said Louise, "you were being so mean to that dog."

"You care more about a dog than you do about your own mother," said Mary. "Why can't you be on my side? I stand up there all alone, and all you're concerned about is a dog."

"The topic was a dog," said Louise.

"You leave me stranded among strangers," said Mary.

"I'm on your side, Mom," said Louise. "I'm on your side. What did happen to King?"

"This is what I mean," said Mary. "King, King, King, King, King."

"Why don't you make a drink and calm down?" said Louise.

"What happened to the almighty King," said Mary.

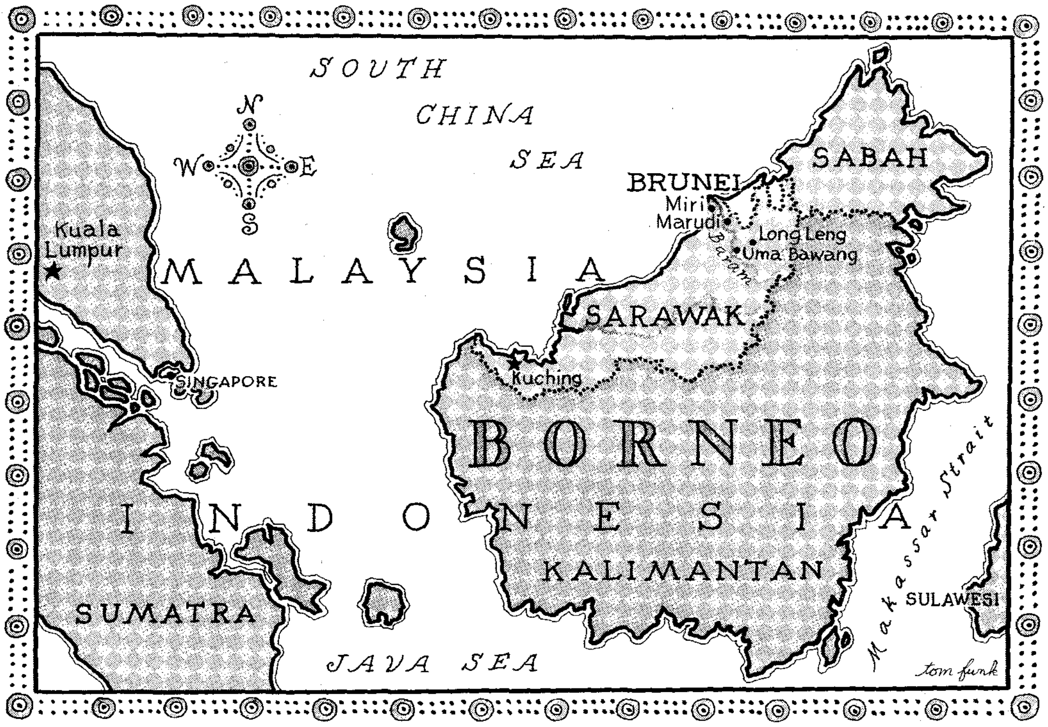
"Why don't you make yourself a drink?" said Louise.

Mary sighed. Then she was quiet for so long that Louise began to wonder whether she had put the phone down and walked away. "That pet-shop woman talked for one solid hour," said Mary. "They had to table my motion and adjourn just to get rid of her."

—Tom Drury

A REPORTER AT LARGE

LOGGING THE RAIN FOREST



MARUDI, the last major trading post along the Baram River before the vast tropical rain forest of Borneo begins, has no doubt proved a disappointment to many of its visitors. Those tourists who associate the island of Borneo with a fearsome primitive existence, a land once dominated by ferocious headhunters, would hardly expect a quiet and well-scrubbed little town of trim houses, Chinese restaurants, and late-model Japanese cars. Four blocks of shops along the main street offer nothing more exotic than plastic buckets, T-shirts with English-language slogans, and cases of Coca-Cola, and the restaurants serve the pork, chicken, and fish dishes that are found in Chinese restaurants all over the world, and not wild game and bitter greens from the jungle. Nor is it possible to distinguish the natives of the rain forest who come to Marudi to stock up on clothing, canned goods, and other enticements of a steadily intruding modern-day civilization from the ethnic Chinese who dominate the town's retail trade; the natives, with their almond-shaped eyes, and skin color ranging from near-white to light brown, resemble Chinese, and most have adopted Western-style dress. The constant stream of cars and motorcycles—the vehicles have to be brought up the Baram by boat, and people can drive only nine miles from Marudi before the road ends and the rain forest takes over—especially speaks of the modern Malaysian state of Sarawak rather than the Borneo of a travel writer's fantasy. (Borneo, the world's third-largest island, after Greenland and New Guinea, straddles the equator, and lies four hundred miles east across the South China Sea from peninsular Malaysia. The northern third of the island is divided into the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah and the oil sultanate of Brunei. The southern two-thirds, Kalimantan, is part of Indonesia.) In Sarawak, a tourist can find a Hilton or a Holiday Inn far more readily than a jungle-style wooden dwelling on stilts. Even the first leg of a trip to some of the most remote parts of the rain forest—the voyage from Miri, on the South China Sea, up the Baram River to Marudi—is made aboard a big air-conditioned river taxi, which blasts videotaped kung-fu movies from a television set at the front of the passenger cabin.

Yet one day last September in Marudi I glimpsed a very different side of life in Sarawak. Most of Marudi is flat, but a good-sized hill rises from one bank of the river. On the hill stands a stately white wooden building, a ninety-year-old fort that now serves as the administrative headquarters for the Baram district, which starts at Marudi and extends through the rain forest to the Indonesian border. Underneath the steps leading up to the main entrance is a little unmarked door that looks as if it might be the entrance to a storage room; instead, it opens into a small, windowless courtroom. In that courtroom, I attended a trial that could perhaps qualify for a unique status in the annals of jurisprudence. Five members of the Penan tribe, wearing nothing but loincloths, stood rigidly at attention in the dock, listening to proceedings that could put them in jail. The proceedings were taking place in English—a language they couldn't understand—because English is the language of the Sarawak courts. But the prosecutor spoke it so poorly that when I interviewed him afterward he couldn't follow many of my questions. The magistrate was a Malay woman from Sabah, and the lawyer for the Penan was a Sarawakian of mixed British and Penan descent. Against a background drone of two air-conditioners and several fans, this polyglot group was participating in a trial conducted under the arcane rules of the British legal system. The five Penan, the youngest of whom was just fourteen, were from a tiny settlement called Long Leng, and the charge against them was that three years earlier they had burned down four small wooden bridges across creeks on a logging road.

The court-appointed translator for the Penan was of scant help. Every few minutes, he would interrupt to summarize in a sentence or two what was happening, but for a people whose universe is confined to the rain forest—many of them are still not aware, for instance, that they live on an island—the court proceedings could just as well have been taking place on another planet. At the first recess, I spoke with their lawyer, Wendel Crocker. Everyone had gone outside, and, since the formality of the British-style court system doesn't take the weather into account, both Crocker and the prosecutor were suffering through a hot, steamy day in dark wool suits, white shirts, and ties. Crocker speaks perfect British-accented English, fluent Malay, and one of the rain-forest dialects, but he and his Penan clients could communicate only through interpreters. "It's a challenging case, because they have such a different sense of time," he told me. "You can't ask 'What were you doing last October 28th?' because they wouldn't know what you were talking about. If you want them to meet you in ten days, they'll put ten knots in a piece of rattan and untie one every sunrise."

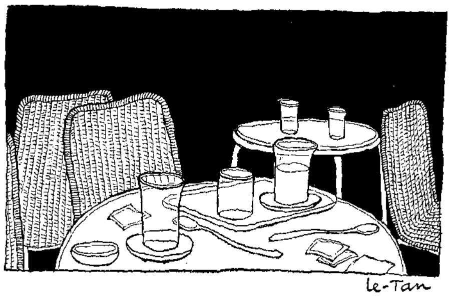
The facts of the case are these: On the night of August 27, 1987, the four bridges, on a road not far from Long Leng, were torched. Although there were no witnesses to the burnings, the police received a report that the five Penan had been in the area, and went in and arrested them. The five confessed under interrogation, one signing a confession and the others, who can't write, putting their left thumbprints on the papers. The defense claimed that the confessions were beaten out of them. For three days, the testimony was devoted to one of the five confessions, and the magistrate ended by throwing that confession out, saying that there were doubts about whether it had been made voluntarily. But she could devote no more time to this trial, because she had a huge backlog of cases stacked up in Marudi—cases involving everything from parking tickets to felonies. Twenty-six Penan—the defendants, their families, and some of their friends—had made the arduous journey from Long Leng, and now they were told that the proceedings would be adjourned until April of this year. Last month, the proceedings were adjourned once more, until October.

The real issue, however, was the logging of Sarawak—a controversy that has reached into the most remote areas of Borneo. Although more than half the rain forests on earth have disappeared in the last fifty years, and although large-scale logging has been a subject of dispute in the Amazon, in Africa, and all over Southeast Asia, logging has hit Sarawak so rapidly and with such drastic consequences that many environmentalists attempting to save the world's rain forests consider it their most urgent problem. Since the logging of Sarawak began, it has spurred a boycott of Malaysian timber in several countries of Europe and has caused Prince Charles, in a speech he made in England in February of 1990, to direct a slashing attack against Malaysia, one of Britain's closest Asian allies. He noted that in the past developed countries had treated their tribal people as "total savages," and went on, "Even now, as the Penan in Sarawak are harassed, and even imprisoned, for defending their own tribal lands . . . even now, that dreadful pattern of collective genocide continues." The words were strong, but then the issue is dramatic: one of the largest, oldest, and richest rain forests in the world is being logged at such a rate that most of it could be gone within five years. The politicians and the wealthy timber merchants of Sarawak, who receive a large percentage of the revenues, are the beneficiaries. So are the Japanese, who are the leading buyers of the logs and use them mainly in their construction industry. The people of the rain forest come out considerably less well: their food supplies are disrupted, their rivers polluted, and their homes destroyed.

Marudi, an otherwise sleepy town of four thousand, has more than once become embroiled in this controversy, as natives arrested for blockading logging roads or engaging in other protests have ended up in its jail. But nothing could underscore the starkness of the issue more graphically than the five Penan standing in their loincloths in the alien atmosphere of the Marudi courtroom. The Penan are the shiest, least aggressive, and most isolated of the Borneo peoples—the last of the hunter-gatherers. They are one of the few tribes on earth that still depend for survival on what is to be found in the forest rather than on crops grown or animals raised. A gentle people, they are always quiet-spoken, they never punish their children, and they are so reticent that for some of them it seems positively painful to meet a stranger. They are extraordinarily generous. Eric Hansen, a young American adventurer who walked across Borneo in 1982 and wrote about his experiences in a book called "Stranger in the Forest," describes a conversation with two Penan. He asked what would be a serious crime in the Penan community. "They conversed for a minute, as though they were having difficulty thinking of any crime," he writes. "Then Weng explained the concept of *see-hun*, which means to be stingy or not to share."

Although, as hunter-gatherers, the Penan of the Borneo rain forest represent some of the last survivors of a pre-agricultural age, to call them "primitive" would be a mistake, since they are impressively sophisticated in their methods of navigating the jungle, in their use of its products to provide their basic needs, and in their means of preserving the rain forest for future generations. Now their future is threatened by an invasion from another civilization, acting in the name of profit—a concept as alien to the Penan as the rules of British law. I wanted to go to Long Leng and learn more about their life, and, on the first day of the trial, it was my good fortune to meet a man who offered to serve as my interpreter and guide in the rain forest. His name was Jok Jau Evong, he was a member of the Kayan tribe, and he lived in Uma Bawang, half a day's boat ride up the Baram. Jok, a leader of the Kayan in the battle against logging, was a skilled linguist; he not only spoke fluent English, Malay, and Kayan but also knew enough Penan to make himself easily understood.

After dinner on the day we met, Jok



“Flypaper, Mister?”

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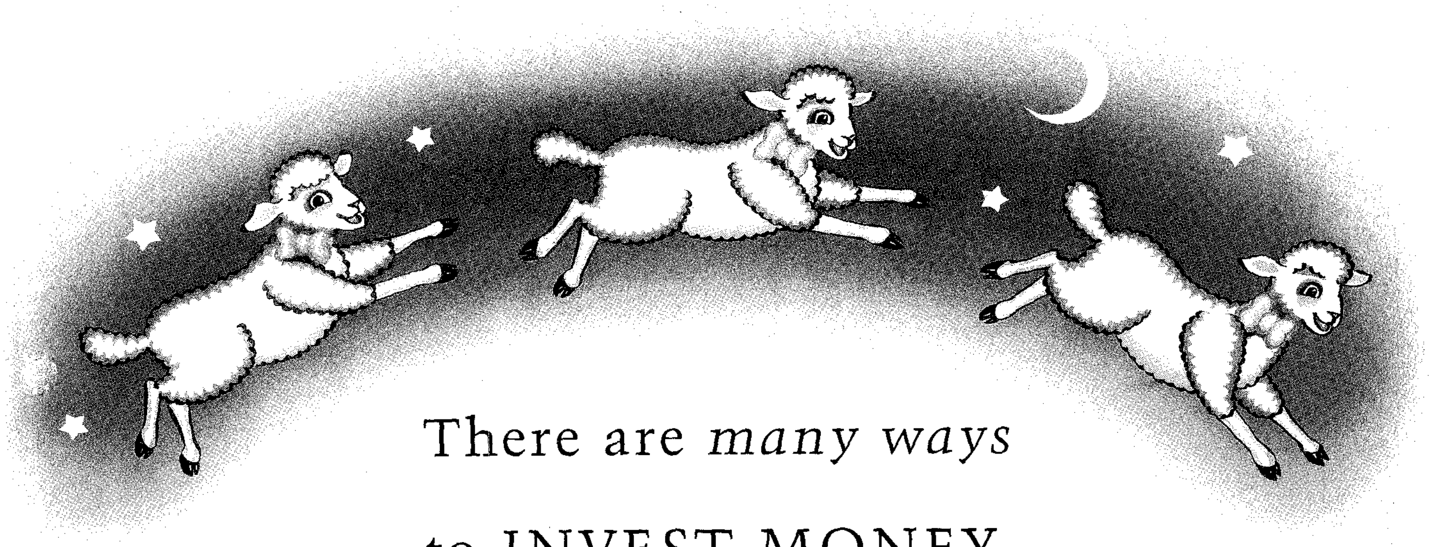
took me to call on the five Penan who were on trial. They were staying in a guesthouse that the government had built for natives who had dealings with the Baram district administration—a simple house of large, unfurnished rooms. Because the Penan live far inland—not near any of the big, navigable rivers, like the Baram—they have been little influenced by Western styles. Unlike the people of other tribes, many of the Penan still dress in loincloths regularly, and not just on ceremonial occasions. Loli Mirai, the headman of Long Leng, who appeared to be in his late forties, was wearing a blue loincloth with bright-red flaps on the front and the back. He also had decorative bands of beads around his forearms and calves, and was wearing the traditional Penan haircut, which, like the loincloth, is rapidly vanishing from the jungle: the hair ends in a perfect circle about an inch above the ears except for a small area in back, where it reaches the shoulders. Two big, circular earrings hung from his distended earlobes. Distended earlobes, which sometimes reach halfway down the chest, have traditionally been considered a mark of beauty for both men and women, but the tradition is now almost universally rejected by those below middle age. Loli readily agreed to my request that Jok and I come to visit Long Leng. Jok would first take me by commercial river taxi to his home in Uma Bawang for a few days. Then we would travel back downriver in one of the community’s longboats—a boat that had been carved from a tree and had an outboard motor attached to the back—and dock at a logging camp called Temala. Jok had a friend there with a four-wheel-drive truck, who would transport paying passengers on the network of logging roads; he could get us to within an easy walk of Long Leng.

IN 1841, a young British adventurer named James Brooke, supported by ships of the Royal Navy, rescued Sarawak from the clutches of the Brunei sultan, who had plundered its villages. Brooke founded a remarkable dynasty; he and his descendants ruled the country for a hundred years—until the Japanese invaded, in 1941—as the White Rajas of Sarawak. The family governed judiciously, bringing peace, suppressing head-hunting, and protecting the people from exploitation. In 1946, Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, the son of James’s nephew, ceded Sarawak to Britain, and in 1963 Britain gave up control of both Sarawak and North Borneo, as Sabah was then called. These two states merged with Malaya, which had been independent since 1957, and with the former British colony of Singapore, which had been self-governing since 1959, to form the federation of Malaysia. Newspapers speculated at the time that the main contribution of Sarawak and Sabah was to provide enough Malay peoples to make certain that the Chinese would never reach a majority in Malaysia, so the Malays could continue to dominate the country. Singapore withdrew from the federation in 1965, as a result of such Malay-Chinese tension, and relations between the federal government and the two Borneo states have never been completely smooth. Sarawak, under the federation agreement, controls its immigration, and requires even a Malaysian citizen to get a visa when he goes to Kuching, Sarawak’s capital. In part because of British fears that the federation would imperil native land rights, Sarawak was accorded the power to set its own land policies. That arrangement proved no insubstantial irony twenty years later, when state officials began to plunder the forests.

In 1933, long before the rain forest was in danger of large-scale exploitation, the Sarawakians made a hard-and-fast rule: no logging would be allowed unless the area had sufficient stock for regeneration. An exhibit in the Sarawak Timber Museum, in Kuching, illustrates the leisurely pace of logging in those days. “Up to 1961, hill forest logging operations were very limited,” a caption says. “Timber harvesting was limited to a very few species which were mainly consumed by the local building industry. In the early days, logging was carried out



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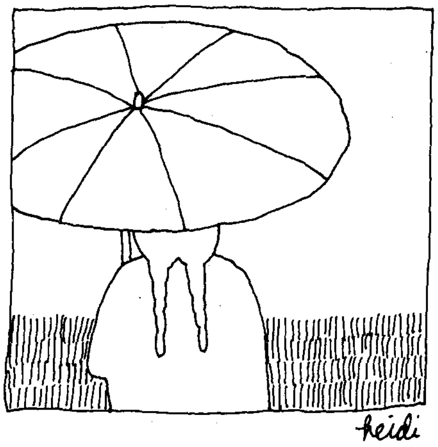
with simple tools—axes and saws—while elephants and water buffaloes were used for log transportation." Then, the exhibit notes, there came a change: "From 1962 onwards, logging operations steadily increased. This was largely due to the entry of Japanese buyers." The demand for hardwoods sent the Japanese from one South Asian country to another to find them. When a country's forests were largely consumed, as had happened in the Philippines by the eighties, or when a country reacted to the logging by enacting restrictions, as Indonesia did in 1985, the Japanese simply headed somewhere else. In this peregrination, Malaysia—and, in particular, Sarawak—proved to be an accommodating host. As early as 1966, a Malaysian government official in charge of timber wrote, "It is incumbent upon us to open an area for exploitation irrespective of whether this area is adequately stocked with the requisite regeneration or not. . . . Inadequacy of stocking before felling should not be allowed to hinder the progress of exploitation." In time, however, Malaysia, too, was forced to enact restrictions. In 1978, realizing that the peninsula's timber supply was rapidly running out, the government announced sharp limitations on logging, to reduce the annual rate of cutting by more than sixty per cent in six years. Today, these restrictions include a ban on the export of raw logs, since a country can get substantially more revenue for a tree if the milling takes place locally.

The state government of Sarawak, however, has always been free to control logging in its own forest—a resource so vast that it must seem to loggers like a bottomless pot of gold. Indeed, the astonishing size and complexity of Sarawak's rain forest have inspired scientists of many countries to devote their lives to studying it. "It can be said without any reasonable doubt that the northwest part of Borneo, including the whole of Sarawak, is the richest forest in terms of trees in the world," says a professor of dendrology who lived in Sarawak for several years and still visits frequently. (He prefers not to be named for fear that he won't be allowed back into the country.) This rain forest, occupying most of Sarawak's nearly fifty thousand square miles—an area slightly smaller than New York State—has been found to encompass some twenty thousand species of flowering plants, several thousand species of trees, hundreds of species of butterflies, a hundred and eighty species of mammals, and more than a hundred kinds of fruiting trees. Thirty birds, thirty-nine mammals, and a third of all plant species are endemic to Borneo. In a twenty-five-acre sample plot, the Royal Geographical Society identified nearly eight hundred species of trees—twenty times the number of native species in all of Britain. Sarawak's several thousand tree species, in a rain forest that may be ten million years old, include some that are a hundred and fifty feet tall. Borneo is the last spot on earth in which substantial growths of dipterocarps remain. This family of trees, sometimes called Philippine mahogany, yields very durable wood for the construction of houses and furniture, and for other objects. Dipterocarps have provided half the hardwoods used worldwide in the last thirty years.

Now, for all its vastness, large parts of the Sarawak rain forest have fallen to chain saws and bulldozers. A visitor doesn't have to consult statistics, or even travel to remote areas, to sense the scope of what has happened; the two-and-a-half-hour boat ride from Miri, an oil-and-timber boomtown, to Marudi is in itself sufficient. For the first hour, for mile after mile, logs were piled on either side of the river—tens of thousands of logs, in stacks sometimes twenty feet high. They had been left there to rot. They were logs that had been brought downriver, inspected by the Japanese buyers, and rejected, either because they were the wrong species or because they were marred by defects. Why cut down trees only to let them rot? In Marudi, I put this question to Harrison Ngau, then the head of the Sarawak office of Sahabat Alam (Friends of the Earth) Malaysia, known by the acronym SAM, which has been battling the logging for almost a decade. "The government says it has a very efficient management plan, yet you see this happening," he replied. "We ask a lot of the workers who do the felling. They say they are never given instructions about what to cut, so anything of a good size they just cut away. Whatever they think can be sold is cut down."



When I continued up the Baram with Jok, I saw a different type of intrusion. The riverbanks were dotted with logging camps; the entire length of the Baram had about a hundred of them, I was told. At the camps, the logs are transferred from trucks to barges, to be transported to Kuala Baram, a harbor at the mouth of the Baram, and picked up by ships. Each camp extended for several acres and had been gouged out of the jungle, creating a sea of mud and raw red earth. Huge earth-moving machines, logging trucks, and other equipment, all splattered with mud, rumbled back and forth. Later, when Jok and I switched from boat to truck at Temala for the trip to Long Leng, I was able to get a closer look at a logging camp. Temala was quite a substantial one, with dormitories, shops, and restaurants, yet no one had bothered to build a walkway or a boat dock to make life easier for the workers and their families. When we got off the boat, we had to step directly into slippery ankle-deep muck and slog through that muck to an area where trucks were parked. As we left the camp, with Jok's friend, I got my first glimpse of the network of logging roads which now crisscrosses the Sarawak jungle. A road may sometimes extend for more than a hundred miles into the jungle, and all the roads seem to be much wider and better maintained than anything I've seen in an American national forest; they allow logging trucks to hurtle along at frightening speeds. What was formerly one of the most impenetrable jungles on earth—accessible only on footpaths, to tribespeople who knew it well—had been conquered and dramatically changed by the giant machines. The logging roads cut across contours, creating barren hillsides and deep ravines. As fast as the daily downpours wash these roads away, bulldozers show up to grade them again. Every few minutes on the trip to Long Leng, logging trucks, sometimes in convoys, would roar by, carrying full loads. On the three-hour journey, I didn't see a single tree as big as the ones coming out in the trucks. The landscape was made up mostly of skinny little trees, ferns, and brush. Everything was green—with the daily rains and a hot climate, it doesn't take long for vegetation to return—but in the context of what once existed here it would not be much of an exaggeration to speak of a forest without trees.

Scenes like the one I saw on the trip to Long Leng—multiplied by thousands, since more than two-thirds of Sarawak's remaining forests are licensed for logging—make the over-all statistics comprehensible. The annual timber cut in Sarawak soared from two and a half million cubic metres in 1975 to twelve million a decade later, and to eighteen million in 1990. From 1963 through 1985, thirty per cent of Sarawak's total forest area was logged. Despite the vast rain forests in the Amazon, Africa, and Indonesia which are still in the process of being destroyed, Sarawak now accounts for almost half the world's export volume of tropical logs.

At this rate of logging, how long can the Sarawak rain forest last? Except in the myopic vision of state officials, the debate is not about whether the timber will run out; it is about how soon. In a May, 1990, report on logging in Sarawak, the International Tropical Timber Organization, or ITTO, which is a forty-three-nation consortium of tropical-timber producers and consumers, estimated that Sarawak's primary forests would be logged out in eleven years. I quoted this estimate to Martin Khor, the coördinator of the World Rainforest Movement—which is based in Penang, Malaysia, and acts as a secretariat for the world's rain-forest groups—and asked him if he agreed with it. "Sarawak was cutting twelve million cubic metres a year in 1988," he said. "The ITTO report, which is very conservative, was based on that figure. But the next year the cut rose to eighteen million. I would say there are from five to ten years left. This is primary forest. Then the companies would have to go back to forests already logged for a second cut, but this would mean very low productivity. Sabah will have no more primary forests by 1995. Our estimate is that Malaysia—including Sarawak and Sabah—which now supplies two-thirds of the

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From offices in Kuching, Sarawak state officials boast about their system of selective logging. It harvests only the largest trees, they say, and leaves the others to grow and the forest to regenerate around them. "We cull the trees," one official told me. "We take only two or three trees an acre; that's not much. There's no clear-cutting, as in America." True, the logging is selective, but people outside the government say that what is selected is every tree with commercial potential, and that the remaining forest is seriously compromised in the effort to get at those trees. Last year's ITTO report came under severe criticism from environmentalists; ITTO has its headquarters in Yokohama, and critics feel that this fact symbolizes the domination of the organization by timber-consuming nations. Even so, the ITTO report reads as a harsh indictment of Sarawak's logging practices. It speaks of a state forestry department too understaffed to enforce regulations, of widespread violations of rules to safeguard watershed areas, and of untrained logging workers who, gaining their experience on the job, ignore selective-cutting regulations. Concession owners and logging companies, it concludes, "plan their operations so as to get the maximum possible output with the minimum possible fixed investment in plant, roading, training, safety, or infrastructure."

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Many who have witnessed the logging operations come away shocked. "There is no management of the logging procedure in the upland forest of Sarawak that I'm aware of," says an American botanist who has spent considerable time doing research in Sarawak. "The road building and the methods of extracting the logs are said to be extremely damaging. The people who man the bulldozers are paid piece rates. They're given no map; they just go into the forest looking for suitable trees. When the trees are cut down, they don't cut them in any particular direction. Then the skidders go in and look for these cut trees with no idea where they are. There's no plan. The companies just go in and take what they can as quickly as they can." Skidders are four-wheel tractors with grapples that drag the logs down to logging roads. The combination of bulldozers plowing their way to each tree that's going to be cut and skidders dragging the tree out—not to mention the haphazard felling of the tree, which takes others with it when it falls—means that ten trees can be lost for every one actually logged. These damaged, crushed, or buried trees add to the damage previously created by the bulldozing of roads, skid trails, log-storage areas, and logging camps, which together can occupy up to forty per cent of the area to be logged. Then, day after day, come the heavy rains, sometimes in torrents. The thin layer of topsoil from the skid trails and other bulldozed areas washes away, eventually turning the rivers muddy brown and—along with pollutants from the logging camps and diesel fuel from barges and other operations—killing the fish. With the tree cover gone and the topsoil washed away, the sun bakes the bare earth, making it inhospitable for all but scrub growth.

The destruction of rain forests is, of course, by no means unique to Sarawak. Tropical rain forests once covered fourteen per cent of the world's landmass, and now occupy just six per cent, most of the loss having taken place since the Second World War. In those four and a half decades, the acceleration of the process has risen steadily. The Rainforest Action Network, an environmental group based in San Francisco, estimates that a hundred and twenty-five thousand square miles of tropical rain forest are now being lost every year—an area almost as large as the united Germany. This represents an increase of almost two-thirds over the area lost just a decade before. Where the great teak forests of India once stood there is now desert. The Philippines has lost more than ninety per cent of its forest cover in the last five decades. Logging in Thailand reduced that country's forest cover from fifty-three per cent in 1961 to eighteen per cent in 1988; in that year, devastating floods linked to deforestation left hundreds dead, and only then did the government ban logging. Forests throughout Asia are being treated like veins of ore—as a non-renewable asset to be exploited at will.

There is nevertheless something special about the deforestation of Sarawak, which puts it toward the top of the agendas of many environmental groups around the world. In Sarawak, there are no mitigating factors: no hordes of jobless are migrating into the jungle as their last hope for survival; no population pressures force the clearing of vast amounts of land for farming or the cutting down of large numbers of trees for firewood. Here the issues are starkly black and white, with the forest dwellers—twenty-four ethnic groups make up almost half of Sarawak's population, of one million seven hundred thousand—the obvious losers. "Sarawak is the belly of the beast in a couple of different ways," Randy Hayes, the director of the Rainforest Action Network, told me not long ago. "It's the oldest rain forest on the planet. Its situation is so desperate that if we can turn it around we can perhaps save a significant part of what's left of the world's rain forests. At some point, you've got to draw your line in the sand and say 'Don't cross this line.' Borneo is that line in the sand."

WHEN I first arrived at Uma Bawang, I could see only one clear indication that all was not tranquil—the presence of a logging camp almost directly across the river. Other indications followed. One involved a constant stream of visitors to Jok's house each morning and night. They would sit in a big room furnished with a beat-up old desk, a blackboard, and rattan chairs made by Jok himself. They talked to him with worried looks on their faces, never laughing, or even smiling. Jok, who is thirty-nine, has light-brown skin and a wiry build. He is among the tallest of Uma Bawang's five hundred residents, although in America his height would be only average. His teeth, like those of most of his fellow-tribesmen, are badly stained from the chewing of betel nuts. In a place where almost everyone speaks in a near-whisper, his voice is surprisingly loud, and it carries force and conviction. Jok was eager to translate the conversations for me, and I learned that they constituted a whole litany of problems: expropriation of part of the community's farmland by the logging company, injuries to Kayan working at low-level logging jobs, the loss of young people to the cities, pollution of the Baram, and a shortage of fish and game which is turning a once self-sufficient community into one dependent on a cash economy.

Walking around Uma Bawang, I found it hard to realize that all these problems existed. There were flowers everywhere, magnificent jungle foliage, bright-colored butterflies, and the songs of birds and cicadas. Whenever I took a walk, people would invite me into their quarters, even if they spoke no English, and would offer me food and drink, and show me their possessions. The most impressive was the blowpipe. A formidable hunting weapon ranging from four to seven feet long and with a sharp-pointed iron head so that it can double as a spear, the blowpipe is carved from a light but rigid piece of wood, then bored out with an iron rod. Darts are about ten inches long and are poisoned with tree sap. A skilled user can hit a target the size of a coin from a distance of seventy-five yards; the poison, which has no known antidote, takes effect in anywhere from ten to thirty minutes. When I tried blowing a dart into the side of a cardboard box a few feet away, just a small breath caused the dart to shoot out and penetrate the cardboard with a loud thwack.

In social situations, the Kayan were touchingly shy. One evening, Jok gave a party in my honor; about twenty people attended, many bringing jars of homemade rice wine—a milk-colored liquid, which I found unusually tasty. Jok had placed his rattan chairs in a line along the walls, and everyone sat down and spoke softly, only to his or her neighbors. After the rice wine took effect, a few of the braver guests rose, one at a time, to do a dance with a ceremonial hat, shield, and sword. Kayan gatherings end in a way that Westerners find strange: anyone ready to leave simply gets up and walks out, without so much as a nod; there isn't a word for "goodbye" in the Kayan language. The blowpipes, the betel nuts, and the dancing all made me feel immersed in another culture, but the sense of isolation in the forest evaporated quickly one evening when a family invited me for dinner. At dusk, the community's generator came on, and at seven o'clock my host and hostess, with big smiles, turned on their television to surprise me with CNN news in English.

Uma Bawang has a tiny general store, whose owner has done well enough to afford a color television and a videocassette recorder, and one night he invited me over to his longhouse to see an hour-long Australian documentary about the logging of the Sarawak rain forest and the plight of the natives. In a longhouse, which can be described as a horizontal apartment building with a communal veranda, an invitation to one person is an invitation to the community, and the big room was jammed with people watching, although only Jok knew enough English to understand the narration. At one point, with the camera showing sunlight streaming through the trees as monkeys swung from branch to branch, the narrator described the forest as "paradise." To many Westerners, the forest represents man at peace with nature, as the abundant land provides food, shelter, medicine, and all other needs. But when I heard the word "paradise" I thought of a very different vision—a scene described by Eric Hansen in the account of his walk across Borneo, which concerned his meeting with a group of nomadic Penan. Hansen noted that the nomadic Penan would occupy a base camp for several weeks to several months. "This base camp is for the very young and the very old people," he wrote. "Forty is old for a Penan. . . . They age quickly because of the harsh environment, and few live to reach fifty."

The romanticizing of the rain forest—the feeling that paradise will return if only the loggers go away—does the natives no service. It ignores endemic problems in many longhouse communities—problems of poverty, disease, and lack of education—and it precludes the possibility of solving these problems by continuing the logging operations but making them environmentally sensitive and using the proceeds to help the people whose lands are being affected. It also assumes that modern civilization offers the natives little more than tar-paper shacks in squatter camps, with women selling their bodies to support their families. But in reality—except among the Penan, where the cultural gap has in most areas been too broad to bridge—the

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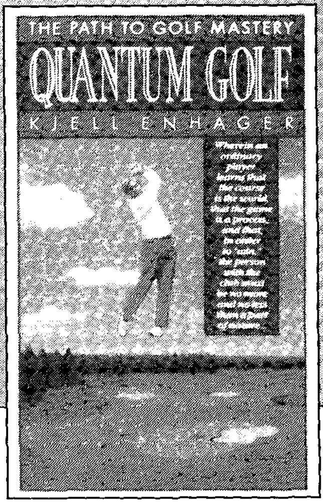

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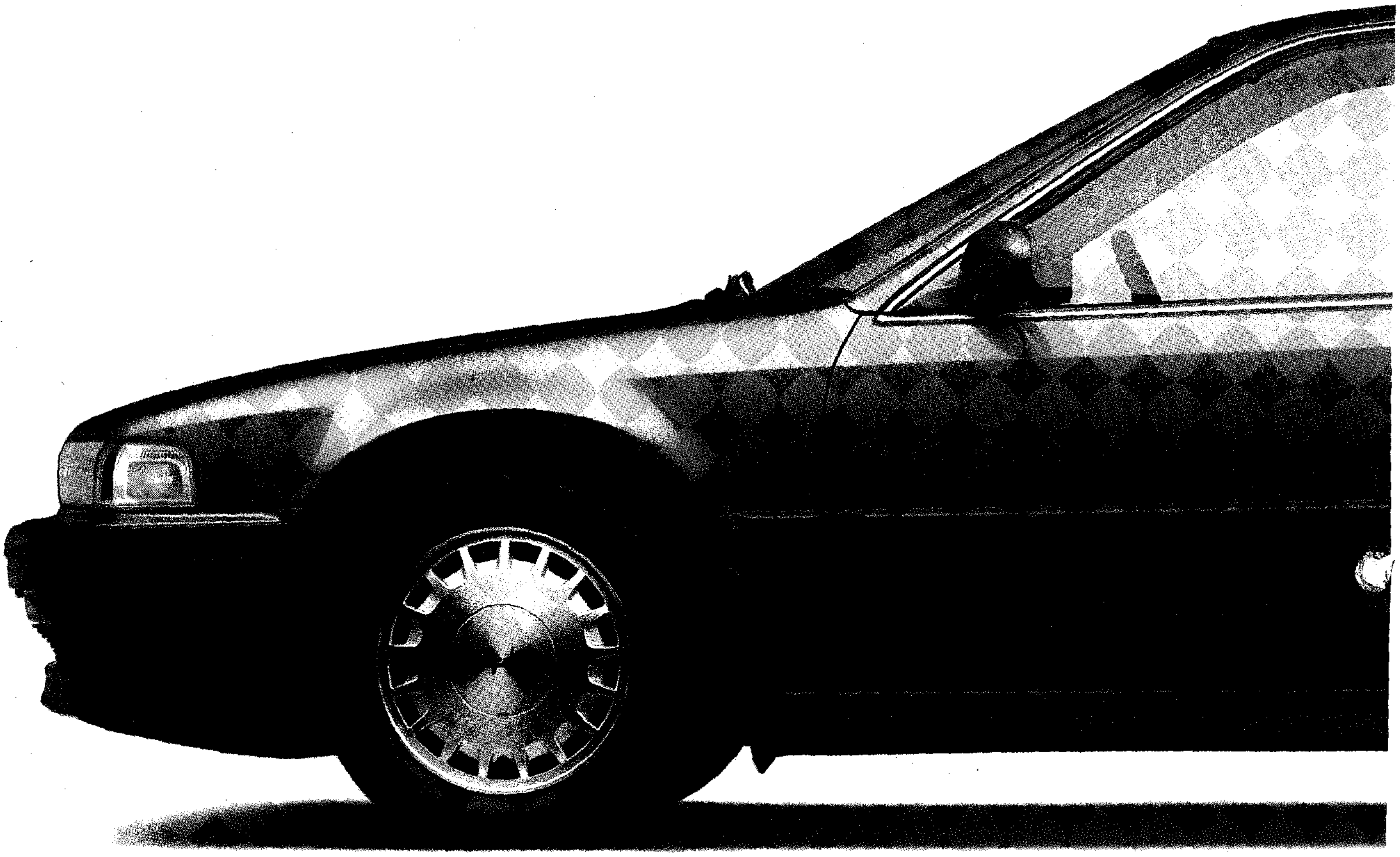

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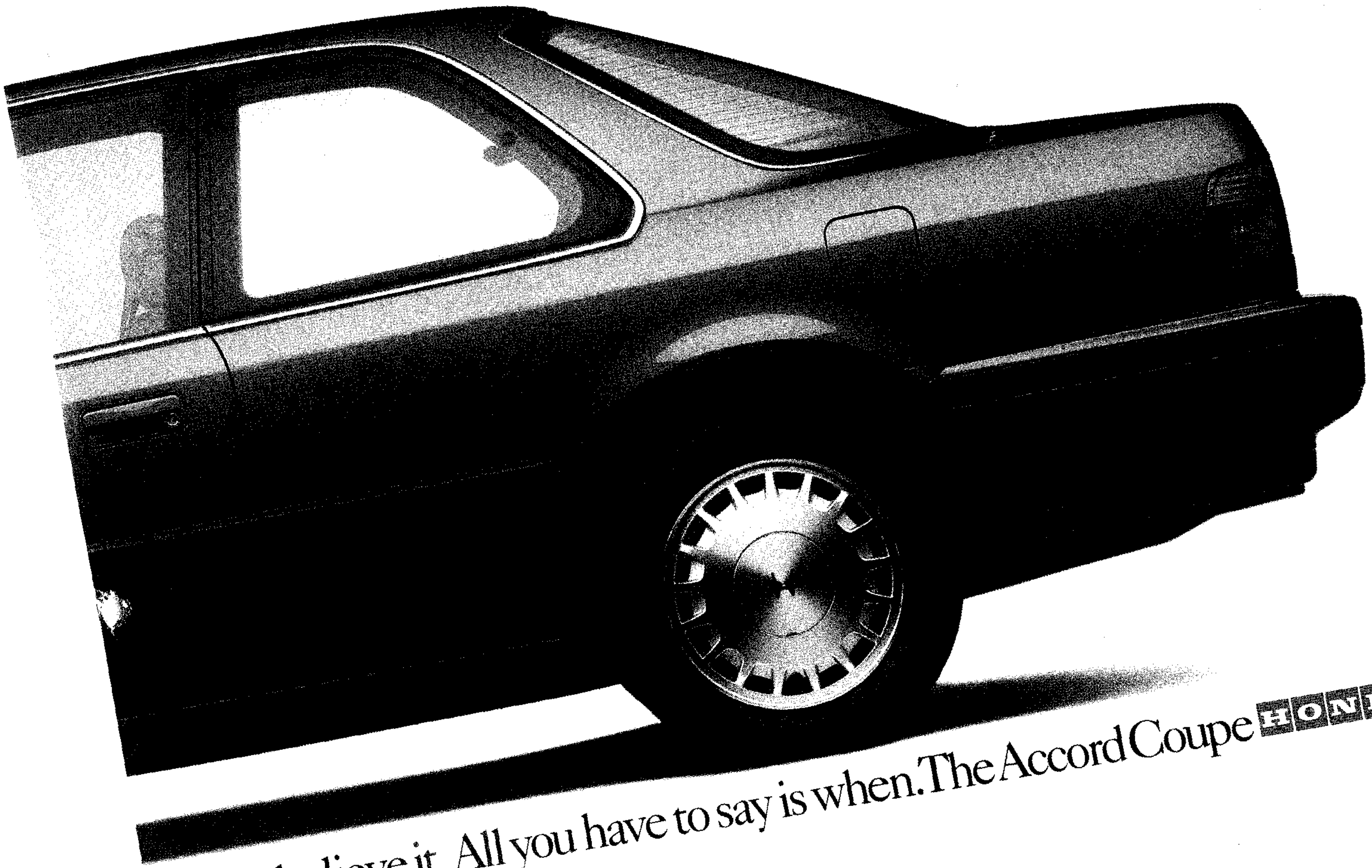

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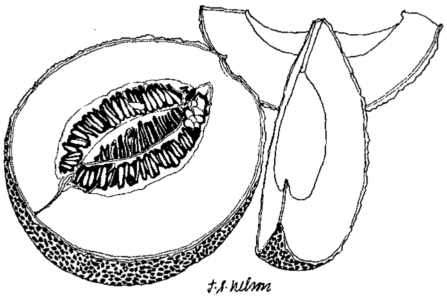
modern world has already come to the longhouses, bringing with it what the natives clearly see to be advantages. Many parents are happy to send their children off to towns or cities for schooling, even though they realize that some children will succumb to the attractions of urban life and never return to the longhouse. Evelyne Hong, a Malaysian anthropologist who has written a book about the threat to native culture in Sarawak, acknowledges the benefits of education and at the same time sees the damage it has done to longhouse life. "Starting in the nineteen-seventies, the government in a big way built boarding schools in cities and secondary schools in semi-urban areas," she told me. "They subsidize some of the costs for poor children, who can bring rice as payment if they can't afford school fees. The government meant well. Even the people themselves wanted this. They knew education was a ticket to a better life, because their children would earn a salary and wouldn't have to work so hard. But the people didn't realize that it would destroy the culture of the longhouse community. Now some longhouses have only the very old and the very young." Jok himself, although he is an untiring advocate of the native way of life, has sent his two young sons off to school in Long Lama, a town downriver on the Baram.

And even the remote Penan have adopted Christianity, which all through the forest either has displaced or co-exists with the forest people's traditional animist beliefs. Their animism—centering on omens from birds and animals, which were thought to be messengers of good and evil—inflicted severe hardships on everyday life. The Penan could not fell large trees for their shelters, because they believed that such trees contained spirits. This belief enshrined in religious dogma the preservation of the forest, and thus their own future, but it gave them no choice except to continue their nomadic existence, since without wood they would have no permanent housing. And their animism complicated that existence as well. If they set out on a journey, and the first birdcall omen came from the left, they would have to return.

Sidi Munan, a member of the Iban tribe, who now heads a political party in Kuching, told me about growing up in a longhouse in the nineteen-fifties. "We believed that any birdcall was from God through the bird," he said. "The missionaries said our traditions were a hindrance to our progress; you can't plant enough rice if you stop because of birdcalls. The priest said, 'You disobey the birdcall and nothing will happen,' and it turned out to be true. They told us that education was the fundamental thing—you could get a job and come back with new clothes and feel the hero of your village. Back then, we didn't have to worry about meat or fish; we would just go out and we'd be sure to catch something. But without education there was no improvement in life. Your father was a hunter and you became a hunter yourself. Christianity and education are the root causes that are leading to the destruction of the longhouse."

The notion of the rain forest as paradise doesn't take into account how hard the natives must work for no reward beyond basic subsistence. I was able to observe this when I went with Jok and his wife, Minah, to spend a night at their farm. Except for the Penan, who rely almost entirely on the forest for food, the people of Sarawak grow rice, the basis of their diet. They practice swidden agriculture, which is also called "shifting cultivation" but is best known by the pejorative term "slash and burn." Jok told me that the community's farmland was directly across the river, but distances in the forest are often a question of one's own perspective. In this instance, "across the river" turned out to be a gruelling two-hour trip.

Accompanied by half a dozen other Uma Bawang residents who were on their way to their farms, we got into a longboat, attached a small outboard motor, crossed the Baram, and headed up a tributary, but soon the river became so shallow that the motor proved useless. In a scene that reminded me of "The African Queen," one of the men got out of the boat to drag it through the water, a second hacked away at the branches and vines with his parang—a machete-like knife that is ubiquitous throughout the forest—and a woman stood up in the back of the boat and pushed it along with an oar. Then came an hour-long hike that mostly involved slogging through muck and crossing streams on slippery logs. When we reached the farms, the difficulties involved in getting there paled beside the backbreaking work of weeding the rice fields, which were on hills so steep that it was hard to get a firm footing; furthermore, we were alternately baked by the fierce sun and drenched by downpours. The farmhouses were crude one-room wooden huts on stilts, and insects inside them cut short any attempt to take a nap. Jok and Minah sometimes spend several days at a stretch working on their farm, and they visit it frequently. For this laborious work—clearing the fields, planting, weeding, harvesting, and milling, with all tools and supplies carried in on people's backs—Jok gets a yield of a year's worth of rice for him and his family; that amount would cost twelve hundred dollars if it were bought in a store. This is in a good year, in which rainfall is adequate and no disease strikes the plants.



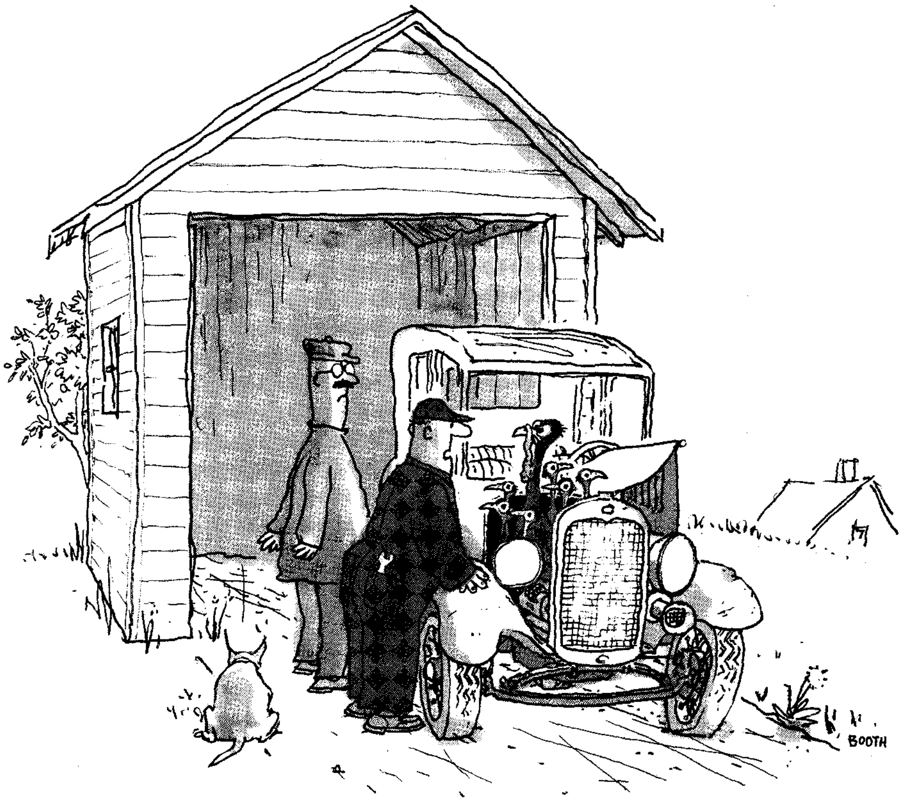
"Slash and burn" calls up images of vast stretches of forest being torched for inappropriate uses like cattle ranching and abandoned after a couple of years, when the soil gives out. But along the Baram River and in most of Sarawak it's a far different story—of a stewardship of the land which displays remarkable environmental sensitivity. The natives call their system *adat*, an unwritten body of rules and principles that extends to all relationships. Under *adat*, the longhouse community clears nearby land to grow rice; the land, called *temuda*, is enough to provide each family with a few acres. The community owns all that land, but each family gets the right to use its own plot and pass it on to the next generation, provided that family members continue to farm it. "Your existence, your identity, is built around the land," Hong, the anthropologist, told me. "The land is more than a piece of earth that gives you food; it's a link between the past and the future. If you lose it, you have nothing. You're reduced to nothingness."

The key to swidden farming is to leave most of the land fallow much of the time, so that the soil can regenerate; otherwise, the longhouse would eventually have to move, because there would be no fertile land nearby. Jok himself uses a ten-year rotation cycle, growing rice on ten per cent of his land one year and moving to another ten per cent the next. Dispersing the rice plots through fallow land also means that the danger from pests is far less than it would be if the plots were concentrated on one site. When long-fallow plots are cleared by the burning of trees that have grown back, the layer of ash fertilizes the soil and increases its alkalinity. The rice is planted with a dibble, a stick that punches holes in the soil for seeds; by not disturbing the soil, this method leaves it resistant to erosion. S. C. Chin, who until recently was a professor of botany at the University of Malaya, in Kuala Lumpur, has studied shifting cultivation in Sarawak, and he estimates that it intrudes on only nine thousand acres of new primary forest each year—a tiny fraction of the acreage destroyed by logging. But swidden farming has provided a convenient scapegoat for government officials. In 1988, Mahathir bin Mohamad, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, wrote, in a letter to a New Zealand environmentalist, "You are wrong if you think giving the forests to the indigenous people will save the trees. The indigenous people practice slash and burn cultivation, and vast tracts of forests have been completely obliterated by shifting slash and burn practice. Logging of selected mature trees allows the forests to regenerate quickly. But, of course, it will not sound noble to condemn the tribal people. It is much more romantic to fight for their rights against the Government."

To get another evaluation of the controversy, I asked Y. S. Rao, the regional forestry officer in Bangkok for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, for his opinion. "In some situations, shifting cultivation is an ecologically harmonious practice, provided that the people are not numerous and the fallow period is long," he responded. "In Sarawak, shifting cultivation is not a danger. It's beneficial deforestation—beneficial to the people."

ON March 22, 1987, bulldozers and trucks belonging to a company called Marabong Lumber appeared across the river from Uma Bawang, on the community's *temuda.* They began the construction of a base camp, a log-collection depot, and logging roads—all on land being farmed by Kayan families. Nine days later, a group of Uma Bawang residents filed a complaint with the police, to no avail. The logging company claimed that it was there legally, because the land had been "gazetted" in 1951. Under this system, the Sarawak government has the power to take away tribespeople's customary land rights by publishing a fine-print announcement to that effect. The tribespeople don't have to be notified personally; often, they learn about gazetting only when the bulldozers and the chain saws show up. In this case, however, there apparently had been notification. Thayalan Muniandy, a lawyer for SAM, the Malaysian environmental group, told me that in 1951 a British colonial officer had come to Uma Bawang and "told them this would be the Uma Bawang Protected Forest," and he went on, "The natives helped him mark the boundaries. People didn't realize that the term 'protected forest' meant that it was protected for the purpose of logging. If a native cut a tree, he would be technically guilty of an offense. The gazette notice was published in English, in an official government publication in Kuching, and the Kayan didn't see a copy until 1987."

In Sarawak, logging activities are governed by a network of political connections that is often called the Ali Baba system, because the right word will open a storehouse of riches. The logging concessions, granted by the state's chief minister, frequently go to friends, relatives, and other politicians, generating many millions of dollars in profit. But little or none of this money finds its way to the people whose farmland was seized. Under the law, compensation procedures are vague—supposedly a matter of negotiations between the timber company and the longhouse community. In some cases, the loggers resolve the issue simply by paying off the headman, or by bulldozing the fields with no compensation at all. "Sometimes the loggers will pay to pacify the community," Harrison Ngau, the Marudi anti-logging activist, says. "But in every instance they are the ones who determine the rate of compensation, not the owner of the property. It's like walking into a store and deciding how much you will pay for something you want to buy." The timber companies hold the ultimate

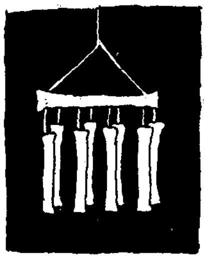


"When was the last time you started her up?"

• •

weapon: if the natives aren't satisfied with the compensation offered, the bulldozers just go to work anyway; the government never interferes.

When some of the Uma Bawang residents went to the logging company and asked for compensation, they were refused; the company cited the right of access that had been granted by the state in the 1951 gazetting. So in April of 1987 a hundred men, women, and children set up a barricade of tree limbs and wooden posts on the logging road and sat down in front of it. This wasn't the first logging protest in Sarawak, but it was the best organized and the best publicized, and it galvanized the native communities into erecting blockades throughout the Baram region. The Uma Bawang protest escalated over the summer, and by October 29th, when special forces of the Malaysian Army and the police swept in by helicopter, more than four hundred people were manning barricades. Forty-two Kayan were arrested, put on an express boat chartered by the timber company, and taken to jail in Marudi. They were detained for fourteen days, the maximum "investigation period" under the law, and released. Since then, there have been at least fifty other logging blockades in Sarawak, many of them ended by police action and arrests. Ngau says that almost a thousand people in the Baram region have been arrested over the years, with hundreds put in jail for the full two weeks. "It's mostly harassment to kill their spirit," he says. "In our society, if you're even questioned by a policeman you're looked upon as a criminal or troublemaker. But now people have respect for you even if you go to jail. Jail has stiffened the protesters' spirit and moved others to join the protests." A month after the Uma Bawang arrests, the Sarawak state legislature passed a law specifically making obstruction of a logging road an offense punishable by up to two years in jail. But while a number of cases have gone to trial, to this day not a single person has been convicted. The charges against the forty-two Uma Bawang protesters were finally dropped in April of 1989, because there was insufficient evidence that they were the ones who had actually set up the barricades.



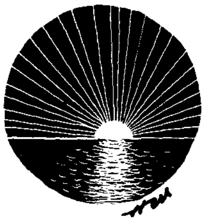
A. Malcolm

The Malaysian government, however, has remedies that go beyond the courts. While Malaysia is nominally a democracy, democratic practices extend only so far. Most of the press is controlled by the governing coalition of political parties, and these newspapers have scrupulously avoided any mention of logging blockades. The Sarawak state government, which is allied politically with the national ruling coalition, doesn't hesitate to use its power over immigration to keep out foreigners with opposing viewpoints. When United States congressional staff members, under the auspices of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, went to Sarawak to investigate the logging controversy, in March of 1989, they arrived in Kuching accompanied by an official of SAM; she was detained at the airport and deported the following day. The Lonely Planet Guide to Malaysia, one of a popular series of travel guidebooks, warns, "The Sarawak state government is touchy about unannounced researchers, journalists, photographers etc., so remember, you're a tourist, nothing more." I myself entered as a tourist and never applied for the permit that the Sarawak government requires for visits to longhouse communities in the rain forest; I feared being turned down and barred from Sarawak.

The most potent weapon for the Malaysian government is the Internal Security Act, which came into effect in the sixties to counter an armed insurgency by the outlawed Communist Party of Malaysia, and was used most recently last September, to arrest leaders of a demonstration protesting the imposition of a toll on a highway. Under the act, the Minister for Home Affairs—a second portfolio held by Prime Minister Mahathir—can detain anyone indefinitely without a trial. In October of 1987, Mahathir used the act to jail more than a hundred prominent politicians, trade unionists, community workers, environmentalists, and religious leaders, but no specific charges were ever brought against them. One of those arrested was Harrison Ngau. I visited Ngau last October in SAM's Marudi office—several cramped rooms reached by a dingy stairway behind some stores. The rooms were crowded with forest people who had come to Marudi to tell SAM staff members about encroachment on their lands by loggers, and to seek advice. Ngau, a small, slight Kayan with light skin and delicate features, grew up in a longhouse, in a family of seven living in three small rooms. He started the SAM office in 1981, when he was about twenty-two years old. (Many Borneo people aren't certain of their age, and arbitrarily adopt birthdays.) Ngau speaks perfect English, though in a voice so soft that it's often hard to hear him. He is strong-willed, however, and is determined to remedy the harm done to the natives. "Bulldozers will take the shortest route possible, even if rice is growing in the fields," he said. "That is what happened at Uma Bawang. They go in first and talk later. The Penan used to be able to hunt for three hours and find meat; now they can hunt for days and catch nothing. Do you sit back and suffer or try to protect your land? It's not just a question of landslides and pollution; it involves human survival."

While Ngau was working in his office on the afternoon of October 29, 1987, a dozen policemen appeared. "They told me I was under arrest under the Internal Security Act," he said. "They handcuffed me, and after they searched my office they went to my home. I was brought by a police plane to Miri, and they locked me behind bars for three days. From Miri we went by Land Cruiser to Kuching, and I was handcuffed the whole way; they were the type of handcuffs that tighten up and cut into you if you move your hands. I was kept in what was called a holding center. I was put in a locked, windowless room; I couldn't tell whether it was day or night. For two weeks, there was nothing to do, just sitting in the room. But then the guards gave me books to read. One fellow brought me a Bible, another a book that described the history of beadmaking. After sixty days, I was released on a restricted-residence order: I was confined to Marudi unless I got police permission to leave. They never charged me with a crime."

In April of last year, Ngau was one of six recipients of the first annual Goldman Environmental Prizes; each recipient received sixty thousand dollars, awarded by a family foundation in San Francisco. Fifty-seven leaders of various nations had endorsed the award program, and one of those leaders was Prime Minister Mahathir, so the Malaysian government had little choice but to allow Ngau to travel to the United States to accept his prize. Members of the SAM staff in Penang told me that they had had to persuade Ngau to stay away from Marudi an extra day to go to Washington with the other recipients and meet President Bush. I asked Ngau about his reluctance to leave his work. “This was my second trip to the United States,” he replied. “I was there for one week in 1985, for the World Rainforest Movement conference. But I don’t really like to go outside Malaysia. I’m not good at meetings; I can contribute more here. Sometimes, at meetings, there are so many ideas that you get confused and forget your objectives. You talk to a Penan who has never read a newspaper or seen television, and he can tell you the problem. The Penan are simple, direct people who care for everybody, and they are more precise and more practical.” When Ngau arrived in Washington to meet the President, he had to borrow a jacket and tie; the jacket was several sizes too large. “I’m not used to all these things,” he said. “We don’t have these formalities here.” When he returned, an English-language newspaper in Malaysia interviewed him and took his picture, but no article about him ever appeared. Nor had any of the peninsula’s daily papers carried news of the award.



Shortly before I left Borneo last October, the Sarawak *Tribune*, in the guise of a front-page news story, launched a bitter attack against SAM, saying that it was “alleged to have instigated the rural people against development brought by the government.” The paper said that the environmental group “was recently reported to be creating racial issues,” which are code words of the Malaysian government when it wants to threaten its opponents. The article represented the government’s initial attack on Ngau’s impending candidacy for the Malaysian parliament, which he announced a few days later. But although the parties aligned with Mahathir overwhelmingly swept the elections, Ngau, running as an independent, won the seat from the Baram district. He ousted Luhat Wan, Malaysia’s Deputy Minister of Works, who had held the seat for twenty-five years and had had the strong support of the logging companies.

Ngau’s victory over a well-financed incumbent backed by the government indicated the depth of the opposition to logging in the Borneo rain forest. Studies have found that the logging has frightened away game and destroyed jungle plants used for food, and thus has greatly increased the incidence of malnutrition. In some areas, the logging operations, by intruding upon native farmland, have led to a collapse of the traditional crop-rotation system and subsequent exhaustion of the soil. The congressional staff members who visited Sarawak in 1989 released a report that September, and summed up the damage: “The people are faced with decreased clean water and food supplies . . . often resulting in malnutrition and disease. Other products on which they depend have also diminished, such as herbal medicine, rattan, and other essential materials. . . . As the resources are depleted, the need for, and dependency on, cash and tradeable items by the tribal people becomes more acute. The tradeable goods and cash are generated from the now disappearing forest produce. It’s a snowballing process of degradation and loss of dietary and other staples which jeopardize their traditional culture and even survival.”

The militance of the Sarawak forest people’s opposition to logging indicates how highly they value their land, for the timber operations have brought material gains to at least some of the longhouses in the form of jobs—jobs whose income allows the native communities to participate in Sarawak’s cash economy and acquire possessions like television sets. About twenty-three thousand tribespeople work in the timber industry, mostly in the lowest-level positions. They pay a fearsome price in terms of death and injury, because no job training is available and safety regulations are not enforced. The jobs open to them are frequently classified as being offered by independent contractors, so that the logging companies won’t have to provide medical coverage or compensation for accidents. Ngau explained to me how it works. “Most of the people injured or killed are called hookmen,” he said. “They hook the cables onto the trees so that the

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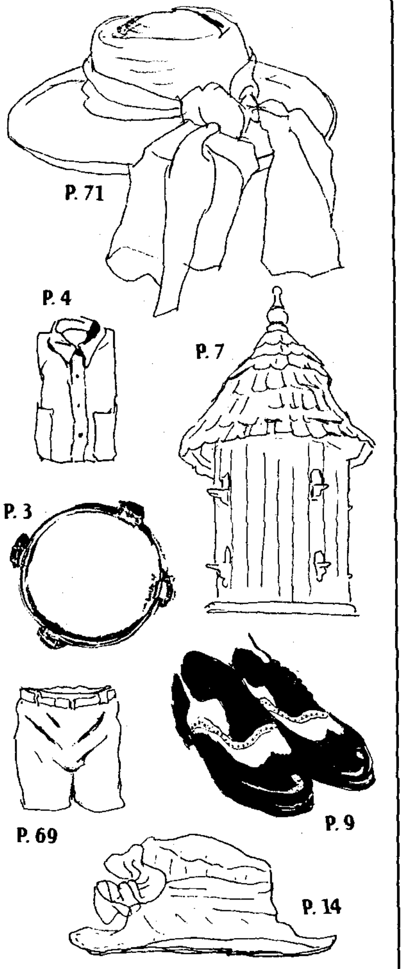

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trees can be pulled away. They're employed by the drivers themselves. If I'm a truck driver, I'll get perhaps five dollars a ton and give my assistant one dollar. We also have a few friends who work in timber camps as boat drivers, and they say that every week there's someone killed—they're bringing out bodies all the time."

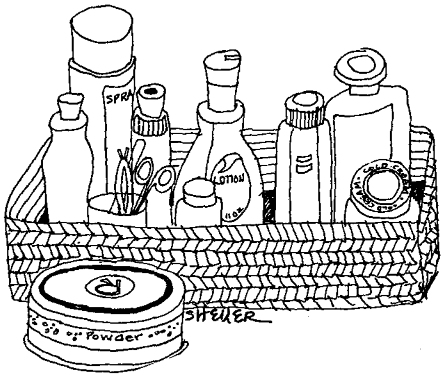
Wade Davis, who has worked as a logging engineer in British Columbia, and who now holds research positions in ethnobotany at the New York Botanical Garden and the Smithsonian Institution, writes in a recent book on the Sarawak rain forest, "Though less than 5% of the Sarawak workforce is employed in logging, the industry, in 1983, accounted for 67% of all fatal occupational accidents in the state. Over the last 17 years more than a thousand workers have been killed, 94 in 1989 alone. In 1980, one in five workers suffered injury and one in four hundred was killed. . . .These figures indicate a rate of accidents twenty-one times higher than what has been reported for the logging industry in Canada."

Logging has severely taxed the social structure of the longhouse communities, which have traditionally operated on the basis of consensus. But—except in the case of the Penan, whose culture is so different that they have stood together—consensus is no longer possible, because the government and the logging companies have set out to buy support. In 1988, SAM charged in a report released to the public that in trying to break up the logging-road blockades "the authorities told the people not to try to stop the timber companies from continuing with their logging activities." The report continued, "Coöperate with the companies, they were urged. Negotiate for a 'commission,' they were told." There have been frequent instances of headmen being put on retainer in return for backing the logging operations, and some of the headmen have signed away the community's land rights, agreeing that the longhouse wouldn't lodge any complaint about the pollution of drinking water or the loss of wildlife and forest products. Because a headman needs an official letter of appointment, the government can control who is chosen and try to oust any headman who opposes logging.

"It used to be that the headman was chosen by consensus," Ngau told me. "Today, it's more political. Even if ninety-nine per cent of the people want to change their chief, it can't be done if the chief is close to the local politicians. Ninety per cent of the longhouses in the Baram district want to get rid of their chiefs. Some headmen get around a hundred dollars a month. Others are employed by the logging company."

Today at Uma Bawang, with some families receiving monthly compensation for their land and others holding jobs for the logging companies, the community is split, with fifty of seventy-six families on record as opposing logging. Opponents of the timber companies say that the compensation being paid isn't adequate, and that it came about only because the timber operators wanted to avoid future blockades. Supporters of logging argue that the compensation would increase if the majority of each longhouse were to change its stand. The congressional staff members visited Uma Bawang as part of their 1989 trip, and noted in their report, "We were informed that the chief and others who supported the logging firms had been adequately compensated."

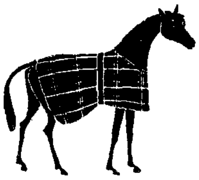
During my stay in Uma Bawang, the headman wouldn't see me. Jok told me that when I arrived the headman had gone by boat to the nearby timber camp and used a radiotelephone to call the police in an attempt to have me arrested. "The headman tries to stop journalists; he claims that the outsiders are trying to instigate us," Jok said. The fifty families who oppose logging have organized as the Uma Bawang Residents' Association, and Jok is their chairman. He refuses to bow to the loggers' demands. "The timber-company camp manager constantly came to see me to break the blockade," he said. "At first, the company promised me a hundred and sixty dollars a month; then they went to two hundred and forty dollars. All that the politicians in Kuching do is divide up the map into logging concessions. They want to be rich in five years, before the next election. They say they're doing selective logging, but what you see is a far different thing. Day and night they're working; that's why there's such a high accident rate. They don't care about lives as long as the money is coming in. We oppose logging because we get our food supplies from the jungle. Now we eat from tins—there's no alternative. Where else can we get food? We oppose logging because we have lost all our resources."



THE problems at Uma Bawang soon faded in comparison with what I witnessed at Long Leng. The truck let us off along the main logging road, and Jok and I walked downhill for about a mile on a rutted, muddy forest track. Suddenly we came upon a clearing, and I saw the sort of longhouse I had read about in books on the Borneo rain forest. Constructed of rough-hewn wooden planks and standing on stilts, it was about eighty yards long and had none of the Western touches that gave the Uma Bawang longhouse a motel-like appearance. To enter the longhouse, we climbed a set of steep wooden steps to the veranda, along which were eighteen doors, each opening into the quarters of an extended family. While everyone who lives at Long Leng knows the number of doors—to a Borneo forest dweller the word "door" is synonymous with "family"—the individual apart from the family counts for so little that no one could tell us the community's population. When I put the question to Loli Mirai, the headman, he looked startled, as if he had never thought about it before, and said he guessed that the correct number was somewhere between eighty and a hundred. The rooms at Long Leng were bare; the rattan mats, pillows, and rickety furniture I had seen at Uma Bawang would strike a Penan as unbelievable opulence. Although Loli welcomed us with great warmth, he couldn't provide a mat or a blanket for either of us to sleep on; our bed was to be the rough wooden floor in his quarters. There is no electricity at Long Leng; at night, the darkness is broken only by the glow of wood fires from cooking pits in the kitchens, which are at ground level behind each family's quarters.

The rooms aren't much lighter during the day, because there are few windows; the Penan, who have lived in the darkness of the deep forest for centuries, seem comfortable in the dim light of the longhouse.

As we climbed to the veranda, children ran over to us, took one look at me, and raced to their mothers, shrieking in terror. I was later told that this was only the second time a Westerner had visited Long Leng. It had been a difficult journey, and I was hot and muddy enough to think about a bath in the nearby river, but the etiquette of the Borneo rain forest prescribes that a visitor must first sit on the floor of the headman's room, surrounded by anyone in the longhouse who is interested, and tell the story of his journey in elaborate detail. The Penan had no written language until Christian missionaries came, and they value such long accounts. Only when Jok had finished his story and answered questions did I leave for the river. The headman's son, Charley Loli, insisted on accompanying me, out of concern that I might meet up with a crocodile. Like many of the younger men at Long Leng, Charley, a tall man in his early twenties, with a wispy mustache, wore shorts and a T-shirt instead of a loincloth. No one wore shoes; the Penan bare-footed could master terrain that I found impossible in sneakers.



At Uma Bawang, I had had to attend the meetings at Jok's house to understand the difficulties that the natives faced. At Long Leng, the problems surrounded me, day and night. Within an hour of my arrival, I noticed a boy with a festering two-inch-long cut on his leg. I cleaned it with alcohol, then applied antibiotic ointment and a bandage. From that moment on, until I left, the next day, people besieged me with requests for help with their medical problems. Two babies had been afflicted with diarrhea for several days, and one looked so weakened as to be in danger of dying; I could do nothing but recommend that they be taken to Marudi. Several people complained of toothaches, and when children crowded around me the smell of their breath was almost overpowering. Many of the Penan, including teen-agers, had lost some or most of their teeth. At night, I heard the constant coughing and crying of children—a noise that penetrated the thin walls and travelled up and down the longhouse. Long Leng had a little two-room clinic, built by the government, but it contained no medicine and had no doctor. The shelves were bare except for many bottles of an orange-colored liquid, which I guessed was an antiseptic. I had heard about a government-sponsored flying-doctor service that visited longhouses by helicopter, but the people at Long Leng said they had never seen a doctor there. Later, in Kuching, a government official told me that the service didn't visit every community but announced by radio where it would be, so that people could come if they were within walking distance. The people at Long Leng, however, with no electricity and no money to buy batteries, hardly seemed to be in a position to benefit from that system.

Even government officials acknowledge that, of all the native groups, the Penan are suffering the most severely from the impact of logging. They are paying the price for their distinctive culture, with its complete dependence on the hunting of animals and the gathering of forest products for daily existence. Now that the wild game has been driven away by the logging operations, and many of the plants have been ground up by bulldozers, the Penan have found themselves incapable of making the quick changes needed for their survival. Most attempts at planting crops have failed, because the Penan have no sense of the passage of seasons that determine when the crops should be sown and harvested. They have had some success only with tapioca and bananas, since both can be harvested year-round.

In an interview, Wade Davis, the Canadian ethnobotanist, explained the problem: "The minute you have to plant things, it determines the notion of time, the patterns of settlement, and it totally transforms your relationship with nature. The Penan have no sense of time or season. If you ask a Penan whether his journey was long, a long journey will be one of hardship, or perhaps much exposure to the sun; a short journey is one in which there were many wild pigs to hunt. There is no traditional sense of the length of a journey, because of their nomadic past; they were constantly on the move, and there was no place to get to. Until

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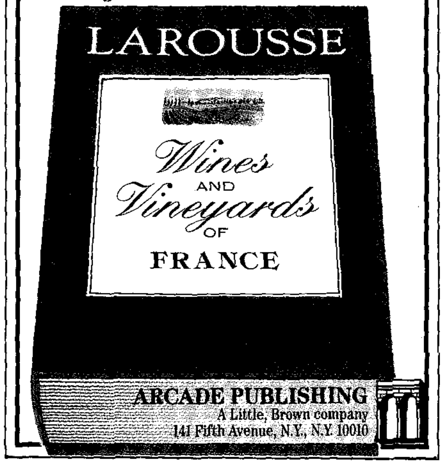

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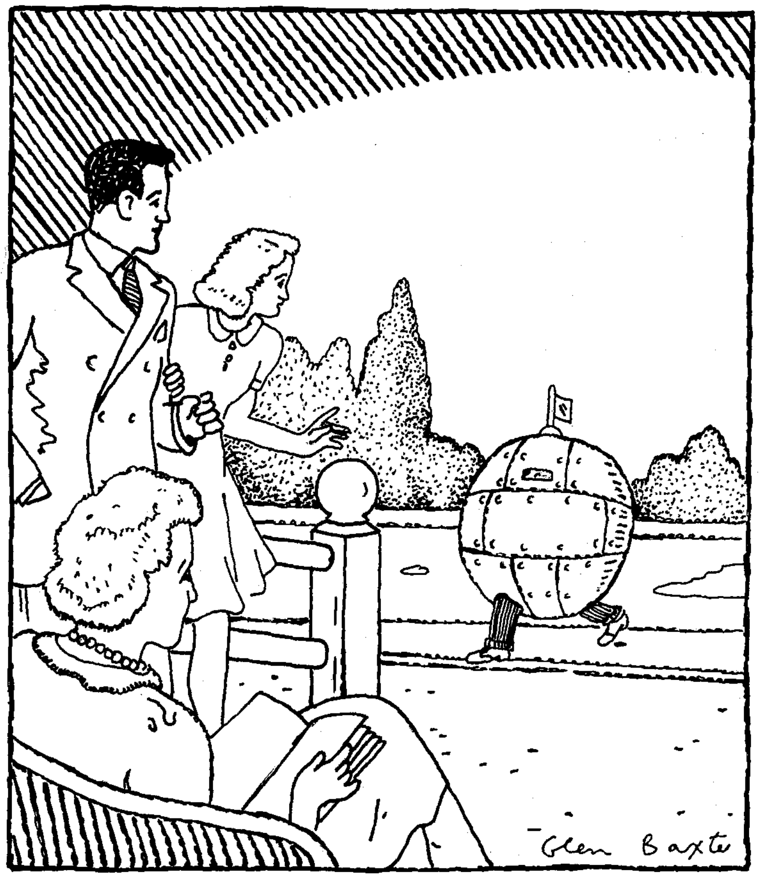
five thousand years ago, this is what all of us were. These people represent what we were for most of our history." The Penan are doubly bedevilled: although it's important for them to switch to agriculture, they, unlike the other forest groups, have no traditional community farmland that they can claim. There is no question of compensation; the loggers can drive bulldozers to their door with impunity. And no Penan have taken logging jobs, for the skills needed are too removed from their culture. Nor have any of their young people chosen to settle in cities in the hope of earning money to send back to the longhouse; for them it would represent a far too alien existence.

Each year, the skills developed over the centuries by the Penan serve them less. "I spent three years all over Latin America studying the rain forests," Davis said. "I've been with at least twenty indigenous tribes in the Amazon and Latin America. But the knowledge of the forest by the Penan surpasses all of them. It's unbelievable." Those who have studied Penan feats of navigation through the rain forest are deeply impressed. The Penan chart their position in relation to rivers, knowing the size of each river and the angle at which it flows. They give names to various features along each trail—to a particular rock face, say—so that the features can be remembered and recognized. In the absence of a written language, the Penan developed an elaborate system of trail directions using whittled and notched sticks stuck in the ground, and they still use this system. As hunters, they are so skilled with the blowpipe that they can put two darts in it and blow out one at a time. They recognize more than a hundred fruiting trees and at least fifty medicinal plants. "There are plants that yield glue to trap birds, toxic latex for poison darts, rare resins and gums for trade, twine for baskets, leaves for shelter and sandpaper, wood to make blowpipes, boats, tools, and musical instruments," Davis writes. And combined with all these skills are a reverence for the forest and deep-seated traditions for preserving it. To maintain the population of wild pigs, they never cut or disturb trees that produce the fruits the pigs eat. They harvest sago—a starch from the trunk of a particular species of palm tree which serves as the basic carbohydrate in their diet—in a way that enhances the area's long-term sago growth, and they won't return to a depleted stand of sago palms for many years, so that it can regenerate. There is a word for cutting more sago than is needed—a deed that the Penan believe will incur the wrath of the supernatural.

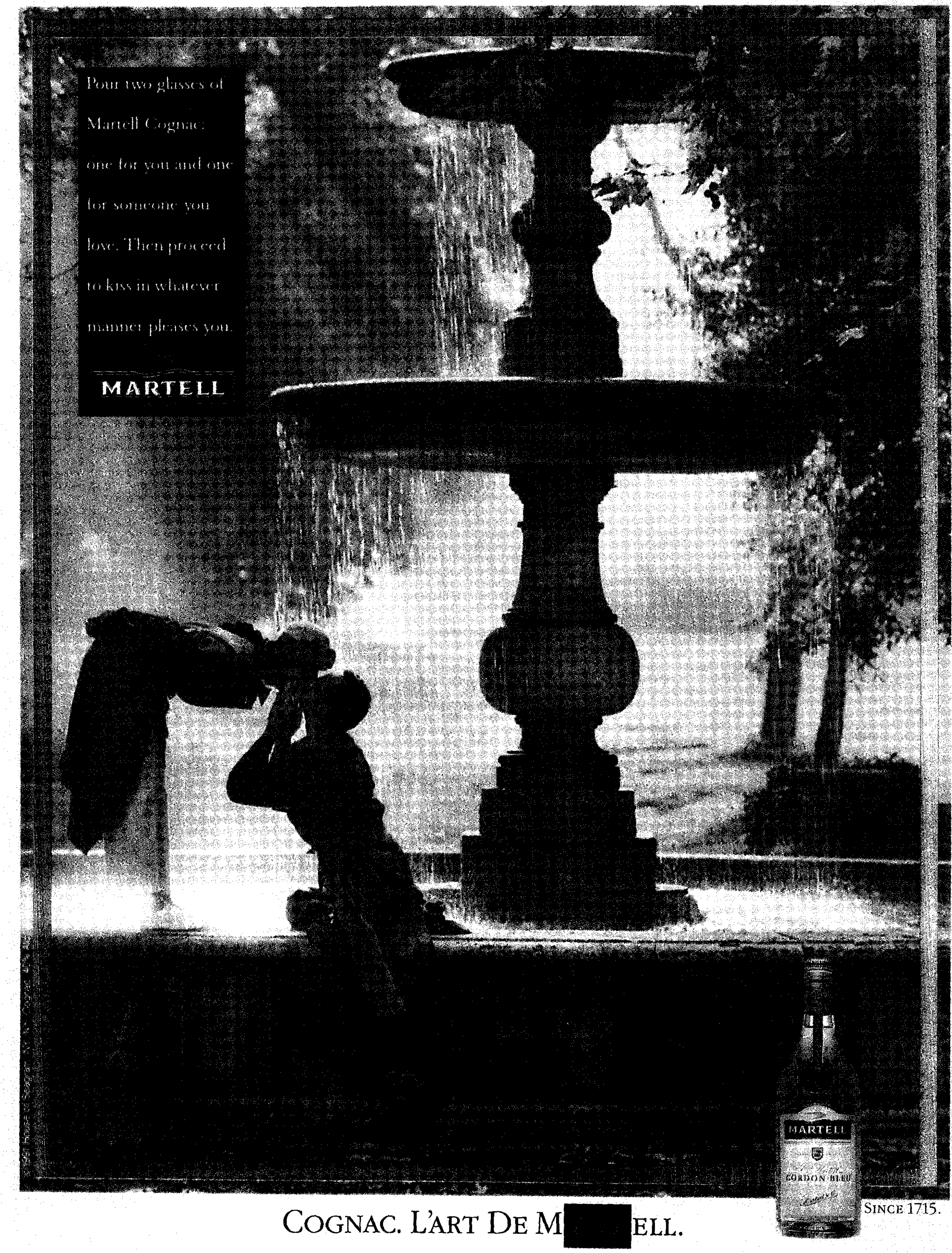


AUNT SOPHIE ARRIVED PROMPTLY AT EIGHTEEN MINUTES PAST SIX.

Today, navigating through the rain forest consists of hitching a ride on a logging truck, since logging roads crisscross even the remotest reaches of the rain forest. What used to be a two-day walk from Long Leng to the nearest Kayan longhouse takes only an hour and a half by truck. Food is in desperately short supply; many of the stands of sago palms have been bulldozed by the logging operations. Much of the river water is polluted. In April of last year, Dr. Tatsuo Hayashi, a physician working with the Japan International Volunteer Center, spent two weeks examining Penan in the Baram region. "The lack of foods containing protein and vitamins was obvious," he reported. He found an "extremely high" rate of intestinal parasitic diseases and predicted a rapid rise in cases of amoebic dysentery and malnutrition.

The effects of logging magnified the problems that had already been created by the encroachment of modern civilization. Over the past several decades, all but a few hundred of Sarawak's nine thousand Penan abandoned their nomadic way of life and settled in longhouses—a difficult change for a people unschooled in the ways of agriculture and trade. The pressure for settlement had come from the government, starting in British colonial times; some officials found the idea of a nomadic tribe in the forest to be an embarrassment, and others genuinely wanted to provide the Penan with services. Pressure also came from the missionaries, who persuaded the Penan to discard a superstitious belief that required them to move on whenever a member of the community died. But adjustment to life in the longhouse was never easy. In February of 1990, when a group of European and Asian Foreign Ministers held a meeting in Kuching, the Sarawak state government took them and some reporters to visit a showpiece longhouse that the state had opened for a group of Penan three months before, in Batu Bungan. Raphael Pura, who has covered the logging controversy extensively for the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, reported that, much to the chagrin of the Sarawak officials, the Penan used the occasion to complain about their conditions. "Logging has forced game to flee, polluted streams and generally made life as the Penan lead it unlivable," he wrote. "Bewildered about the present and uncertain

THE ART OF FRENCH KISSING.



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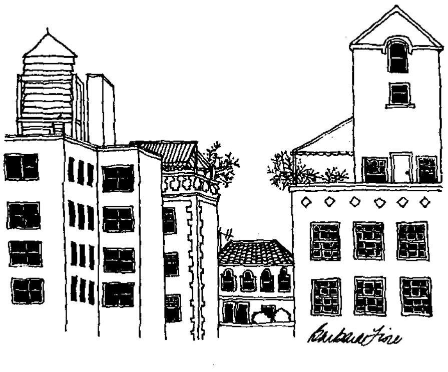
about the future, the Penan appear dispirited."

The logging operations affected the lives of the Penan to such an extent that some of them turned to an activity that had no precedent in their culture: civil disobedience. Starting in March of 1987, Penan families participated in erecting barricades on logging roads. In December of 1988 and January of 1989, a total of a hundred and twenty-eight Penan were arrested for manning the blockades, and many were kept in jail for several days, under what were later charged to be brutal conditions. In a statement to SAM's newspaper, one of the Penan said that during the first few days in the Marudi police station "over 70 of us were cooped up in two small cells with one toilet," and he added, "There wasn't a place to lie down, only to squat or sit the night through. Some of us had to lie on top of one another." As in the case of the Kayan arrested at Uma Bawang, none of the Penan were actually convicted. But handcuffing the men, dragging them from their families, and throwing them in jail under a system whose laws and language they didn't understand proved traumatic.

In their protests, the Penan gained an unlikely ally—a young, reclusive Swiss shepherd named Bruno Manser. Ultimately, he so alienated Malaysian officials that he had the unique distinction of being denounced simultaneously as a Communist, a Zionist, and a would-be Tarzan. Manser, who was fascinated by the indigenous people of the rain forest, had come to Sarawak in 1984 and lived with a group of nomadic Penan. He adopted the Penan life, wearing a loincloth, learning their language and hunting techniques, and giving up all material possessions except paper, a pen, and a flute. The pictures of Manser in the jungle, complete with ankle and leg bands and native circular haircut, are startling; he looks every inch a Penan except for a very European face with wire-rimmed glasses. In six years in the rain forest, Manser compiled a Penan-English dictionary, filled a number of journals with notes and sketches, and helped the Penan communicate with other native groups and with Westerners about the difficulties caused by logging. It was this last activity that got him into trouble with the government, which seized upon his presence as proof that "outside agitators" were provoking the logging blockades. About two hundred soldiers searched the rain forest for him, and the government offered a thirty-five-thousand-dollar reward for his arrest. At one point, the soldiers caught him, but he escaped by diving off a police boat into a river. Last year, Manser decided that he could do more good by leaving Borneo and publicizing the plight of the Penan, and in April he successfully slipped out of Sarawak.

Manser, a shy and introspective intellectual, bridles at the idea of being called a Tarzan or an Indiana Jones, and in interviews he will talk only about the Penan and not about himself. But Anja Light, an environmentalist who spent several days with him at Penan encampments in June of 1989 and again in January of 1990, told me about his life in the rain forest. Light's two trips to visit the nomadic Penan were themselves not without risk, since the police and soldiers looking for Manser had done their best to turn the rain forest into an armed camp. On her first visit, she had to walk a day and a half with a Penan guide to evade the troops searching for Manser; the second time, she hid under a tarpaulin in a Land Cruiser while her guide and her driver persuaded soldiers that they were out on a hunting expedition. "Bruno was treated by the Penan as one of their own," Light said. "They called him a *lakeh Penan*—a Penan person. They didn't want him to leave. A lot of his work was disseminating information among the tribes. He could write messages and help coördinate activities. Also, he talked to the Penan a lot about the methods of nonviolence; he was influenced strongly by Gandhi. He was a very solitary person; sometimes he went into the forest alone to do his studies. The Penan thought he was crazy when he would climb a ridge just so he could look out over the land, or when he caught snakes just to sketch them, and then let the snakes go. I liked Bruno from the start. I had my recorder, and we played flute-and-recorder duets together. He really seemed not to possess an ego; that was the Gandhian image in him. People who met him left feeling really touched." Light said that she visited Manser in Switzerland last September. "Every day, he's speaking to groups," she said. "Every evening, he does writing about his experiences in the jungle. He has travelled all over the world on speaking tours, without a break, since he came out of the forest. He still looks like a Penan to me—his energy is like theirs."



I spoke with Manser by telephone last October, when he stopped in Calgary in the course of a world tour that took him to another city every couple of days. "I don't like this life style," he said. "I will retire as soon as success is achieved."

I asked him why he was so dedicated to saving the Penan culture.

"What's being done is a violation of human rights," he replied. "It's more important than just an environmental disaster—there's a human-rights issue. We are using their resources to promote our own way of life. They were a happy people, sharing everything with each other, with more than enough to eat. Their society had been in harmony with nature. 'Stay peaceful' is the law of the Penan. They don't take more from nature than they need. But look at our society. What are we leaving for future generations?"

Much of what I saw in Long Leng validated Manser's apprehensions. Long Leng's setting, in a bowl of hills and next to a fast-flowing river, is idyllic, but behind the ridgelines in every direction the loggers have already done their work. "Our longhouse is an island," Loli Mirai told me in one of several conversations we had. "The logging is all around. Before logging, you could hear the sounds of monkeys and other animals, but now the timber companies are surrounding us."

The first loggers arrived at Long Leng in 1981, and contributed building materials to the longhouse as a conciliatory gesture. But the good will did not last long, because it was followed by an act that the Penan considered a desecration. The very next year, the bulldozers plowed through the community's burial ground, a mile from the longhouse, and built a logging camp right on the grave sites. "We had put up a sign, but it did no good," a Penan named Seman Yang told me as I sat with a dozen Long Leng residents on the floor of Loli's room. "My mother and father were buried there."

The timber camp on the old burial ground was the site of one of the barricades that the Penan erected in 1987 and 1988. I asked the people at Long Leng whether any of them had been arrested in the protests. Many had been, I learned, and at one point four Long Leng residents had been kept in jail for two months. Joseph Lalong (some of the Penan bear Christian names, because of the influence of the missionaries) was one of the four. "There were so many mosquitoes I couldn't sleep," he said. "They wouldn't give me a mosquito net, and there was no soap the whole time. They wouldn't give us fresh water. They pointed to the pipe used to flush the latrine, and said to drink from that pipe. During the two months, they allowed me only one visit by my wife, for five minutes. I was very worried about my wife and daughter. Three families lived in the same room; all the husbands were in jail, so my wife's father had to search for food for all of them. The day I was released, her father collapsed on the logging road and died. I think he starved to death."

I asked about the trial for bridge burning which I had attended in Marudi. Our conversation brought out the complete bewilderment that the Penan feel on being caught up in a swirl of political and economic forces that they barely understand. I pressed them about dates and chronology, but their responses were hopelessly contradictory, because none of them had learned to think about events in such a context. They had, however, heard the word "Communist"—a Communist, they knew, was someone bad—and when it came up in our conversation everyone laughed. "The government always calls us Communists," Loli said. "Actually, we feel the real Communists are the timber companies, because they are the destroyers."

The people of Long Leng had grasped little about the Marudi trial or about the significance of the magistrate's throwing out the confession of Aping Mirai, who was the one defendant who could sign his name. Aping was in the group speaking with me, and he told me how the whole affair had begun. "The police and timber-company officials came to the longhouse and asked us to come to the timber camp," he said. "The police officer they took me to see slapped me four times and said, 'You are a criminal.' I had no idea what this was about. I didn't know what was happening. Finally, they told us the timber company suspected us of burning the bridges. After they took us to Marudi and locked us up, we were so scared we agreed to what they said."

The dispute over logging wasn't all that was on the mind of the Penan of Long Leng. "The forest is empty," a man named Juling Deon told me. "There is no more food supply in the forest. Sometimes we don't have anything to cook. Sometimes our children are crying for food." That particular day, a hunting party had been out since dawn, and it returned as darkness fell. For a change, there had been some luck: one of the men had caught a mouse deer, an animal the size of a dog. But that would provide only one tiny bite of meat for each person in the longhouse. The hunters had walked for miles and had been without food for the entire day, but when I glanced at their faces I saw more than hunger. A pall hung over them—the look of men who could no longer provide for their families. Charley Loli took me from kitchen to kitchen to visit all eighteen of the families. Some were stirring pots of tapioca paste, a substitute for sago; others, apparently having eaten all their tapioca flour earlier that day, were just sitting around their cooking fire talking in quiet voices. Loli's family of ten, whom I was joining for dinner, had the benefit of snack food I had brought for the trip. It wasn't much, but it supplemented the tapioca, and they plunged in eagerly. Then we sat on the floor in the darkness and talked, our conversation punctuated by the sound of rats skittering around the room.

MY taxi-driver in Kuching needed no address to find the house of Y.A.B. Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib bin Mahmud, the Chief Minister of Sarawak. Everyone knows where it is, for it is perhaps the most magnificent house in Sarawak, and, though I didn't have an invitation, I wanted at least to see it from the street. Situated on acres of land on a plain

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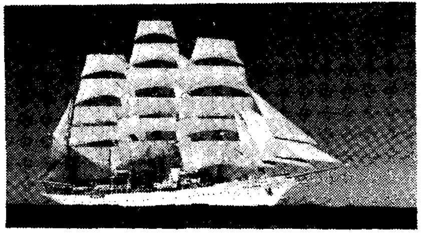

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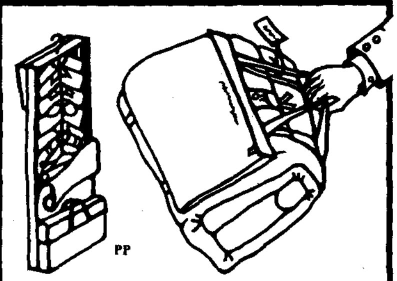

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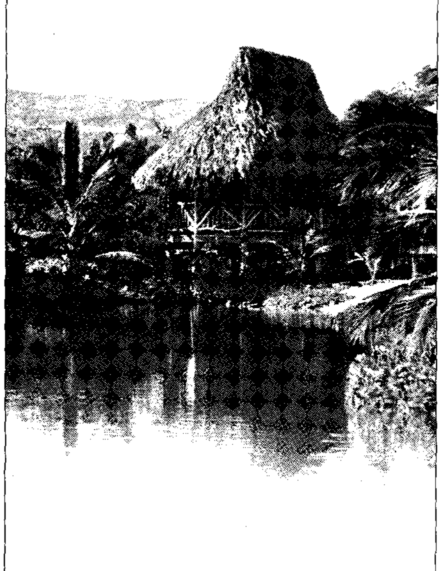

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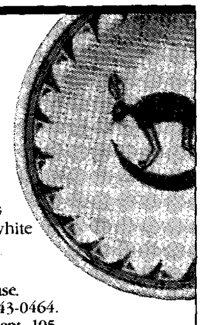

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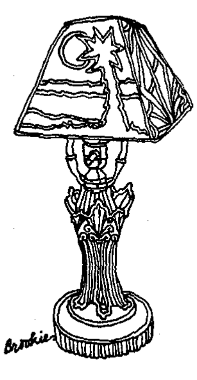
across the Sarawak River from central Kuching, the house has an unusual roof line, suggesting the turrets and the dome of the Taj Mahal. I later spoke with a Kuching resident who had been to the house many times, and she described the interior for me. "Have you seen a Hollywood set for the house of an eccentric Italian count?" she asked. "That's what it's like. It's stuffed full of antiques, and there are beautiful Oriental rugs. When there are official receptions, though, they take place outside the house, under canvas awnings. You can look through the windows, but you can't go in. Some people think that that's a bit much—they invite you to their house but they won't let you in." The house isn't the Chief Minister's only impressive possession. He drives a Rolls-Royce, and his office contains a fountain—because, one associate explains, "he is a religious man and it helps him meditate." In a country where politicians collect titles the way generals collect medals, his very name bespeaks status. Y.A.B., for Yang Amat Berhormat, is equivalent to "the Right Honorable." Datuk Patinggi is a title comparable to a British knighthood. Tan Sri translates as "lord." On official portraits, his name is followed by the initials of nine other honors, including one each from Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, and South Korea.

While Taib is clearly a very wealthy man, his precise worth is a matter of speculation. It is masked by a complex web of financial transactions. The ITTO report on Sarawak neatly compresses what the organization calls the "concession hierarchy" into one sentence: "The licensee, i.e. the concession holder or concessionaire, sub-contracts his rights to a second party who in turn sub-contracts the [logging] operation to a third party who employs the people who actually do the logging on the basis of payment by output." At the top of the hierarchy is the Minister of Resource Planning, who has sole discretion to give out logging concessions. Taib finds the time to hold this portfolio himself, along with that of Chief Minister. Under the law, he can grant concessions to anyone he wants: relatives, friends, political associates, or nominee shareholders—people who hold concessions on behalf of secret beneficiaries. The concessions are granted free of charge, and the holder isn't required to know the difference between a live tree and a telephone pole, since the actual logging can be subcontracted. Nor does the holder have to prove financial viability. "We've looked at their incorporation forms, and some say their paid-up capital is two dollars," Ngau told me. Occasionally, the Chief Minister is in a charitable mood, as was the case several years ago when he granted a concession to the Sarawak Football Association. But longhouse communities need not apply; all their efforts to gain concessions have been turned down.



The people of Sarawak got a peek behind the veil of secrecy in 1987, when a dispute erupted during Taib's campaign for reëlection. His political opponent happened to be his uncle Abdul Rahman Yakub, who had been his predecessor as Chief Minister, and the two tried to make political capital out of revealing each other's timber holdings. Taib took the initiative, saying that he was revoking timber licenses for twenty-five concessions totalling three million acres held by friends and relatives of his uncle, and Rahman responded by giving the press the names of relatives, friends, and associates of Taib's who held almost four million acres. The lists of both candidates included wives and daughters and involved front companies and foreign bank accounts. The combined acreage of the two political opponents amounted to half the forest land in Sarawak which was then still available for logging. I had read an article putting the value of the logging concessions controlled by Taib at four billion dollars, and in Penang I asked Thayalan, the SAM lawyer, whether such a thing was possible. He called the estimate "reasonable."

The politicians aren't the only people who profit. The timber merchants who do the actual logging—they are mostly Sarawakians of Chinese descent—share in the proceeds. (There is a racial split throughout Malaysia, with politics dominated by the Malays and business by the ethnic Chinese. Taib is a Melanau, a member of a Muslim indigenous group in Sarawak closely allied with the Malays.) The most powerful of the timber merchants, Tiong Hiew King, is a man of considerable political influence, and he himself has been awarded logging concessions. A senator in the Malaysian parliament, he runs a family timber company that does more than a hundred and eighty-five million dollars' worth of business a year. Raphael Pura, of the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, investigated Sarawak landholdings in an article in February of 1990, and reported, "Sen. Tiong's 800,000-hectare [1,970,000-acre] timber empire of concessions and logging contracts includes the forest that Uma Bawang's rebel farmers are struggling to retain. His partners in that concession: Tan Sri Taib's sister, the Sarawak government, a private Islamic foundation, and a second influential senator." How much the timber merchants pay the concessionaires under the table to get the contracts for the logging operations is unknown, but there is speculation that twenty million dollars to gain a single contract isn't unusual.

Of the vast amounts of revenue from logging, the system provides a relative pittance to the government. The timber companies have to pay Malaysian income taxes, but their financial statements often end up showing losses or only small profits. In his February article Pura wrote about one such company, Rimbunan Hijau, which operates in the Baram area. Between 1976 and 1987, it took in more than seven hundred and fifty million dollars in revenues but paid the federal government less than two million in taxes. The state government collects a royalty on each ton of logs. That amounts to only a per cent or two of the timber's selling price, but so extensive is the scale of logging that this revenue provides nearly half of Sarawak's budget. Where does the rest of the logging income go? Sarawak is rife with rumors of large-scale transfers of capital overseas, of purchases of land and homes in Canada and Australia, of bank accounts in Switzerland. "These people are millionaires," Ngau says, of Sarawak's politicians and timber merchants. "They cannot spend the money in their lifetime." One fact is certain: little money reaches the longhouses beyond the wages of logging workers and whatever can be squeezed out of the Sarawak government in the way of compensation for lost lands. For the Penan, there is no money at all.

"Yes, you are good-looking, but how can I be sure you won't lose those looks over the years?"

• •

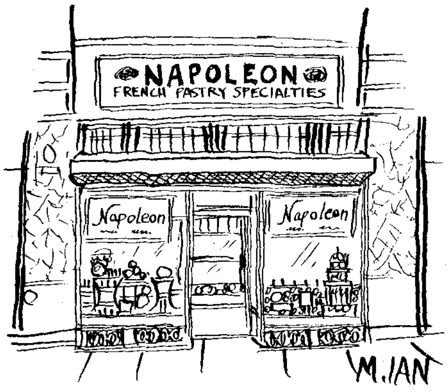
Everything about Sarawak's Ali Baba system of timber concessions places importance on getting as many logs as possible out of the rain forest as quickly as possible. The politicians face an election every five years, and if they lose, their successors could revoke the concessions. The timber merchants get paid for each ton cut, so a tree left unlogged represents money they cannot claim. And hanging over all this is the spectre of restrictions that the government of Sarawak might someday be forced to impose in order to make logging sustainable. That spectre was renewed again this March, when the Malaysian government threatened to curb the export of raw logs in Sarawak, in an effort to spur the growth of wood-based industries. The result has been a feverish effort to cut down trees—an effort so intense that logs are being hauled away even in the middle of the night. "The truck drivers work until 11 P.M.," Ngau told me. "And then they're wakened by the foremen at 2 A.M. to work again. That's why the rate of accidents is so high." The government regulations that do exist are routinely ignored. State officials have never suspended or revoked a company's license for destructive logging practices. I asked a researcher who has spent some time in Sarawak about the impact of the concession system.

"The basic cause of the damage from logging is the economic system under which logging operates," he replied. "It's the policies that the government allows to prevail. The forest could have been harvested at a sustainable rate. The argument of the need for development is not an honest argument, because the amount being set aside for development is very low. You don't see alternative industries, new employment, improved housing, major gains in education, but all these things should have been possible in the way this resource has been converted into cash. Basically, the end result has been a massive transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich in the form of wood, which is being converted into cash and invested outside Sarawak."

I wanted to discuss this issue with Taib, but the Chief Minister had no interest in talking to me. His press secretary took my initial call and then refused to speak with me further, and never responded to my request for copies of Taib's speeches on logging. Some Sarawakian officials were more forthcoming, however. I met Leo Chai, the director of forests, in his office, in the Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation Building, a twenty-story skyscraper that houses the government agencies concerned with forestry, as well as the Sarawak Timber Museum and the quasi-public S.T.I.D.C. In an unfortunate flight of fancy, an architect had designed the building to look like an axed tree stump, with the roof flat in the center and slanting unevenly down to the vertical walls. The fact that the government agencies charged with protecting the rain forest are housed in a tree stump of sorts is a piece of symbolism not lost on opponents of logging. Chai declared that "there's no way we can finish logging the forest in eleven years," and he told me that the government had plans to reduce the annual logging cut by a third before 1995 to make sure that the logging was sustainable. "We will have a compromise with the timber companies," he said. "We will extend their licenses, and they, in turn, will reduce their annual cut." But Chai was less reassuring when I asked how such a provision could be enforced, since logging companies do pretty much as they please no matter what the regulations. "Their licenses can be suspended if they are found to do excessive damage," he said, but he conceded that in the first nine months of 1990 there had been only one suspension, and it was for logging in another company's area. Chai described himself as a professional forester, and sidestepped questions on the concession system.

After my visit to Long Leng, I was curious about all the claims by state officials of government programs to aid the Penan. At Long Leng, except for a notice saying that the longhouse had been visited by a malaria-control officer, I could find no evidence of aid. I asked Jayl Langub, a Sarawakian government official who I had been informed had devised many of the Penan-assistance plans, what had happened to it. He told me of an idea proposed in 1988 as an alternative to uprooting the Penan and relocating them, which had been done at the unfortunate showpiece longhouse at Batu Bungan; instead, the government would establish service centers at centrally located Penan settlements, so that others could walk there. Each center would have a school, a clinic, and an agricultural station. "Our proposal was submitted in 1988," he said. "Now it's 1990, and not much has happened. It has always been 'next year.' There is no lack of ideas, but we have a problem with implementation."

The most forceful advocate of the government's point of view is James Wong, the Minister of the Environment and Tourism and also the head of a political party allied with Taib. Wong, who says of himself, "I am going to be famous for being infamous," happens to own a logging company and to operate a timber concession of four hundred thousand acres. In the anomalous world of Sarawakian politics, the fact that the Environment Minister moonlights as a logger doesn't raise an eyebrow. But it has drawn expressions of outrage from overseas, and Wong can't understand why; he points out that the trees he cuts down come under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Department, not his own. Other government officials might shy away from the press, but Wong relishes being interviewed. And in 1988, when the London *Sunday Times* printed an article he objected to, he responded by writing a five-part series called "Stumble in the Jungle," for a Sarawak newspaper. The series was illustrated with photographs of swidden agriculture, which Wong blames for the destruction of the forests. Captions included lines like "Not a single tree is spared" and "Soil erosion caused by shifting cultivation, which contributes to river pollution." The series included a poem Wong wrote about the Penan, beginning, "O Penan—Jungle wanderers of the Tree / What would the future hold for thee?" Referring to the wearing of loincloths, which are called *chawats*, the poem asks whether society "in good conscience" could "allow him"—a Penan—"to subsist in Blowpipes and clothed in *Chawats*."



On my last evening in Sarawak, I interviewed Datuk Amar Wong (Datuk Amar, like Taib's Datuk Patinggi, is a title equivalent to knighthood) just after he landed on a flight from Kuala Lumpur. In Malaysia, a high status in society provides you with many prerogatives, as well as with titles before your name. Wong arrived at a V.I.P. terminal next to Kuching airport's main terminal, and a large green Mercedes with flags on the front fenders waited outside for him. He was greeted by an entourage of family and associates, and then I went into a meeting room with him. The juxtaposition of his two jobs has made Wong easy to paint as the villain of the Sarawak logging tragedy, but in person he is difficult to dislike. Exuberant and intense, looking much younger than his age, which is sixty-eight, he raced from one subject to another; his volubility faded on only one subject. When I asked for an estimate of the worth of the timber holdings of Taib's family and associates, he simply said, "I can't answer that."

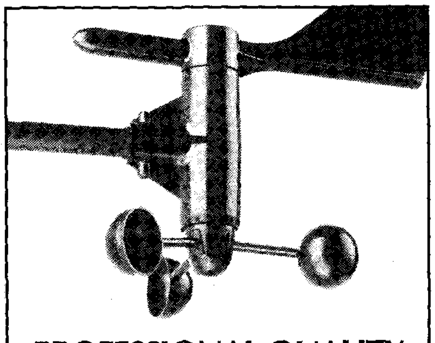
Wong feels maligned by the world's press. "Sarawak has one million seven hundred thousand people," he said. "There are twenty-four different native races, each with its own language and culture. The Penan are just one. And, out of nine thousand Penan, only three hundred are real nomads. These are the ones Bruno Manser lived with. He got so much press, and he gave the impression we were ogres, having Penan for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. People don't understand that logging in Sarawak is selective logging, culling, leaving the balance to regenerate. Even our local papers made a hue and cry over logging. They say there's no more fish in the river and I say, 'Rubbish. I'll show you some fish. The fish are there; the forests are there.' After I showed the local reporters, they were converted. It would be nice if human beings could eat the egg without breaking the shell. Even the Greens live in houses, and those houses were built on land with trees on them. Will you please report factually? We love this country, we care."

Like Chai, Wong thinks that only a relatively modest reduction in logging is needed to make the timber supply in the Sarawak rain forest sustainable indefinitely. Environmentalists sharply disagree. A paper published in October by the National Wildlife Federation concluded that a reduction in Sarawak logging of at least eighty-five per cent would be necessary. Other environmentalists question whether sustained-yield forestry can work under any set of circumstances in the tropics, because the soil is poor and might not support endless generations of newly planted trees. If Sarawakian officials are looking at the situation with undue optimism, it's easy to see why: the consequences of running out of logs are too grim for a politician to deal with before it happens. Native communities now dependent on income from logging jobs will be cut dry, and will be unable to turn to the depleted forest for sustenance. Nor will the state, deprived of much of its revenues, be able to step in with support. "What's going to happen when the timber is gone?" asks Hong, the anthropologist. "Politicians will have made the money, and the natives will have lost their land and their society. They will be no better off than the aborigines in Australia. They'll drift to towns, become despondent, turn to alcohol. Drunkenness and violence are already increasing among the tribespeople who now live in the cities, and these are a people traditionally known for being peaceful."

A solution to the crisis of the Sarawak rain forest will not be easy to find. Some environmentalists want an international boycott of Malaysian timber, but others argue that if the trees are rendered valueless, vast areas of the forest will be bulldozed for agriculture, cattle ranches, and the like. Some rainforest advocates are also promoting a boycott against Mitsubishi products, since Mitsubishi is the most visible of the big Japanese conglomerates involved in the Borneo timber trade. Two long-term solutions make considerable sense. One is for the Sarawak government to ban the export of raw logs from Sarawak, since the milling process would create considerably more revenue and lessen the need to cut down so many trees; it's estimated that making a log into a piece of furniture, for instance, would increase the revenue yield seven times. The second is for the government to encourage tourism and the collection and sale of forest products to replace part of the income from logging; some experts feel that marketing pharmaceuticals from jungle plants represents a huge, largely untapped market. But either of these proposed solutions would require enormous international pressure to break the stranglehold of the politicians and timber merchants of Sarawak—a stranglehold that puts money in their pockets for every tree that is cut down.

What about the people of the rain forest? The issue is not whether change should come to the forest; as the color televisions in the wealthier longhouses illustrate, change is inevitable. The real question is who governs the change: those who live in the forest, or those who want to exploit the forest dwellers for the riches of their land? Several people I spoke with mentioned the Amish as an ideal model, since they have been free to choose for themselves what aspects of the modern world they want to accept. Rao, the United Nations forestry official, puts the problem this way: "Not all logging is ecologically destructive. We couldn't be where we are today without having created arable land. The question is: For whose benefit is the forest subject to attack? If this attack is happening to make a few rich men richer, it is repugnant to the values of society. If it benefits the life of the forest people—their health and education, their standard of living—then it's acceptable. There's one thing I can say categorically: the people who benefit should be the ones who have a vested interest in the resource for generations to come. The perceptions of outsiders should not be imposed on them. If they want change, if they feel the urgency of change, then you can't say that change will be for the worse."

SHIBUYA STATION, in Tokyo, exceeds even that city's normal standards of congestion. With its rail and subway lines, it is always a sea of people, both inside and on a big plaza in front. In the plaza is a famous statue of a dog named Hachiko, which waited faithfully outside the station each day for ten years after his master died one day at work. Last October, a demonstration took place next to the statue to mark the opening of World Rain Forest Week. It was the first time Japanese environmentalists had participated in



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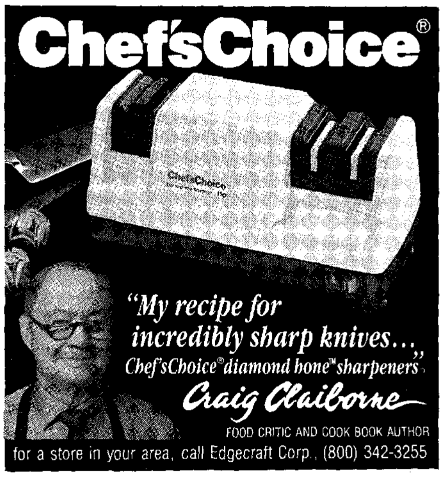

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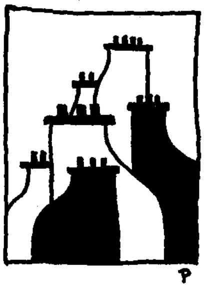
the worldwide activities, and about twenty members of the Japan Tropical Forest Action Network, or JATAN, passed out leaflets as a folksinger entertained. It was a warm, sunny day, and thousands of people passed by during the hour I was there. But only about thirty stopped to see what was going on, and about two-thirds of those were foreigners.

Clearly, the environmental movement has yet to penetrate, or even to dent, the Japanese consciousness, but activists are working hard to improve the situation. JATAN and several other environmental groups share a cramped apartment, piled to the ceiling with papers, in a run-down building with the grandly inappropriate name of Shibuya Mansion. Yoichi Kuroda, JATAN's coördinator, often sleeps on the floor there, because he is faced with too much work to allow him the luxury of going home at night. In a country of gray or blue suits for men and prim dresses for women, the uniform of both the male and the female environmentalists is bluejeans and a T-shirt. While the environmentalists haven't succeeded in spurring a mass movement, their frequent press conferences and demonstrations have caught the attention of Japanese companies. The companies have responded, but not by changing their practices. "They're very polite to me," Kuroda told me. "Corporations call our office and ask us to have lunch." In 1989, the Los Angeles *Times* reported, "Mitsubishi and 86 other members of the Japan Lumber Importers' Association have reacted to criticism by contributing to a $70,000 fund aimed at promoting environmental research. That represents a commitment of about $800 per company."



The voracious Japanese appetite for tropical hardwood has turned Sarawak into something resembling a Japanese plantation. The Japanese government sent foreign aid to build logging roads, justifying the move by arguing that the roads would be travelled by local people. Yet, as a National Wildlife Federation study of Japanese economic assistance pointed out, these people could use the road only by "hitchhiking rides on the many logging trucks, clinging dangerously to the back of speeding vehicles overloaded with logs." There are Japanese engineers directing the building of bridges and logging roads, and Japanese companies supplying the heavy machinery. In 1989, Japanese imports of Sarawak logs jumped by twenty-seven per cent and represented fifty-three per cent of Japan's total tropical-log import volume. That year, Sarawak sent almost half its logs to Japan; the remainder went mainly to eight other Asian countries.

I had come to Japan to learn about the final destination of so many of the trees taken from the Sarawak rain forest. I later realized that I carried an American's preconception—the idea that tropical hardwoods are put to the most artistic, craftsmanlike uses, like beautiful houses and finely carved furniture. But when the staff members of JATAN laid the statistics in front of me I saw something dramatically different. Three-quarters of the tropical hardwood coming into Japan ends up as plywood, mostly for the construction industry. Many of the new houses as well as commercial buildings going up in Japan today are of reinforced concrete, not wood. To pour the concrete walls, a mold is necessary, and the mold is almost always made of plywood. In the United States, plywood for this purpose comes from softwoods, often pine—a low-cost wood that can be grown on tree farms. But ninety-six per cent of Japan's plywood is made from tropical hardwoods. On the average, the plywood molds can be used two or three times before they become heavily damaged. Then they are discarded—either buried in a landfill or (in areas with fewer air-pollution problems than Tokyo) burned.

Sarawak's dipterocarps provide a beautiful, durable wood, resistant to warping, with a smooth, defect-free surface. Why use this wood for such a lowly purpose as plywood molding that quickly winds up on the scrap heap? The answer is price. In defiance of logic, it costs less to cut down a tree in Sarawak, ship it to Japan, mill it into thin sheets, and glue them together for plywood than to make plywood from an inferior softwood tree growing in Japan. Part of the explanation is labor; loggers and truck drivers in Japan earn far more than comparable workers in Sarawak. But a less obvious reason is that the Sarawak rain forests are free; no compensation for the use of the land is factored into the cost of the tree. The Sarawak government gives out the concessions instead of charging for them, and the forest people, whose land it has been for centuries, get nothing or a pittance. In the skewed system of politically motivated contracts and under-the-table payments, the actual worth of the raw material becomes irrelevant. The system allows, in effect, for the gold of the Sarawak rain forest to be minted into pennies.

The tropical plywood has become so much a part of the Japanese construction industry that building contractors wouldn't consider anything else. Richard Forrest, the eastern-Asia representative of the National Wildlife Federation—which is one of the groups that share the apartment in Shibuya Mansion—told me, "Plywood in the United States looks bad; there are knots, weak spots, and an uneven surface. In Japan, plywood has not a single knot, not a single defect. I spoke with an official of the Japan Lumber Importers' Association, and he said the Japanese construction industry would never accept what he called 'zebra plywood.' They're using a material far too good for many of its uses." Forrest said that some of this plywood also went to make cheap furniture—furniture so little valued that it's often discarded on the street when people move to a new home.

I asked Forrest to show me some of the plywood molding. We didn't have to walk far. The area around Shibuya Mansion was filled with construction sites, and sheets of the plywood were everywhere. At one building, the concrete had hardened, and the ripped-up plywood lay in a big heap, ready to be trucked off to the dump. In Shibuya Mansion itself, the elevator had sheets of the tropical hardwood taped to three of the walls, to keep the walls from being scratched when furniture was being moved, just as canvas is used for that purpose in the United States. I rubbed the palm of my hand across the plywood in a broad sweeping motion. I had always associated plywood with an uncomfortably rough surface and the possibility of a splinter, but here the wood had a completely smooth, almost velvety feel. As for the elevator walls that were being protected, they were made of plastic that unconvincingly imitated a wood-grain finish.

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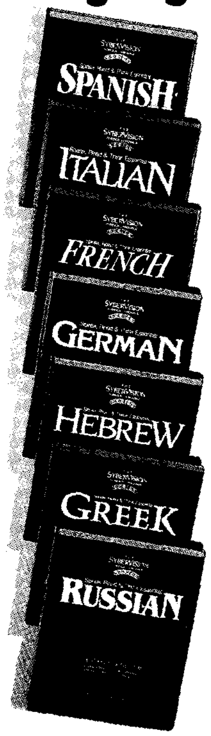
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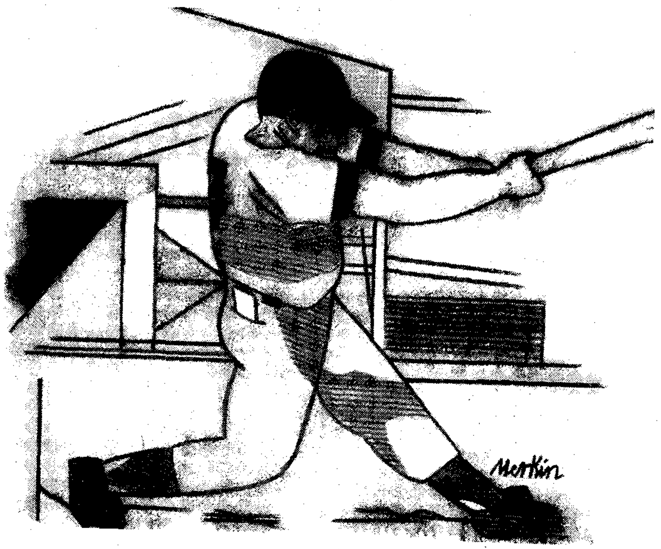


WHERE I was was in Boston, at my mother-in law's. We'd stopped off for a couple of days on our way back from a vacation in Maine. I was in the living room (view of the Charles River), intently watching via black-and-white television (view of Clint Hartung leading off third and Whitey Lockman leading off second; awareness of the Harlem River, somewhere offscreen), and when it became plain that the Dodgers weren't going to walk the batter to set up a possible double play, I gestured urgently to my wife, just then passing from kitchen toward bedroom with a jar of Gerber's in her hand. "You might not want to miss this," I said, unable to lift my gaze from the screen. "It could just be—"

"Be right back," she said, disappearing from the room.

Too late. Several other things now disappeared as well—in rough succession: the ball, into the lower grandstand seats at the Polo Grounds, above the left-field wall; self-control ("They did it! They did it! My God, they did it!" I yelled, rushing distractedly from room to room, bumping into walls and dogs and relatives); Bobby Thomson, the batter (who had just written the meaty portion of the first sentence of his obituary, whenever that would be), into embraces of his teammates around home plate; the Dodgers (severally, slowly, slumpingly, across the littered outfield and up the steep stairway to their clubhouse); and—soon thereafter, it seems—all further memory of the day and the game and my own succeeding emotions and remarks and celebratory gestures and exclamations on this the greatest moment of my life as a deep-dyed, native-born Giants fan, fan of baseball, fan of fable, *fan.* My mind goes blank, I mean, with me more or less in midair there in the Back Bay, possibly trying to invent the high-five some thirty years before its time. The four-run ninth-inning rally, capped by Bobby Thomson's killing homer against the Dodgers' Ralph Branca, not only won that 1951 National League pennant for the Giants (the two teams had finished the regular season in a tie, and split the first two games of their best-of-three playoff) but stands as the most vivid single moment, the grand exclamation point, in the history of the pastime. So we believed then—*knew* it, on the instant—and so I believe to this day, and it's funny that I can remember nothing else about that afternoon.

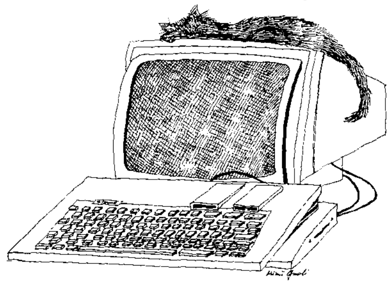
Homers will do that to you. Even when one goes out in mid-game, it stops the story. Nothing *ensues,* for the connective tissue of the game—the men on base, the defensive deployments, the pitcher's struggles, the count, the score—has been snipped, and all our attention falls upon the hero. In the stands, we yell or groan and, a little distanced, observe his tour of the bases and the home-plate ceremonials. The cheering dies away and we resume our seats, waiting for the game to show its face once again. Game-winning homers *really* slam the door. Bang go the cymbals: wow, it's over. The curtain drops, the houselights come up, and, numbed, we grope around under the seats for our wraps as the long night's drama and the soaring sudden moment go rushing off arm in arm into the past. Kids love this ending, but the rest of us, greedy for context, are a fraction let down, much as we hate to admit it. Home runs are non-participatory; home runs, as Crash Davis might have said, are fascist. In the clubhouse after the game, the slugger is smiling, his face still alight, but he hasn't got much to say. "I've been seein' the ball pretty good lately. It was a slider, a little up, and it went out." He shrugs, almost apologetically, and the writers go off to talk to the batter and the base runner and the third-base coach about that double in the sixth, with a man on base. The manager isn't much help, either. "You saw it," he says in his office, his hands in the air, and the talk shifts to the next day's starter. Home runs are terrific fun—jaw-dropping, preposterous, grandiloquent, outta here—but the strange thought obtrudes that we fans may not always appreciate them as much as we should.

The 1951 Thomson classic will be seen often on our home screens this summer—Bobby, in that grainy black-and-white, prancing around third (where Eddie Stanky suddenly runs into the picture from the left and tackles manager Leo Durocher, there in the coach's box), and his swan dive into the jovial sea of teammates at home plate—for it is part of a triple jubilee for baseball this year: a celebration of three seasons, now thirty, forty, and fifty years gone, that were all illuminated by extraordinary offensive feats. In 1961, Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris launched their conspicuous double assault on Babe Ruth's hallowed (the word inserts itself here like a cab-meter drop) record of sixty home runs in a season, which ended when Maris knocked No. 61 against Tracy Stallard, of the Red Sox, in his second at-bat of the final day of the schedule, at Yankee Stadium. Mantle, who was ill or injured through most of September that year, had fallen back near the end, and wound up with fifty-four. He is not much mentioned nowadays in connection with the Maris exploit, but his lurking switch-hitting presence immediately behind Roger in the Yankee batting order had a great deal to do with the outcome. The two M's, in any case, batted in a total of two hundred and seventy runs that summer.

Maris pulled off his coup, it should be recalled, in spite of a summer of tormenting publicity and distraction. He had wafted twenty-seven home runs by the end of June, forty by the beginning of August, and fifty-one by the time September came along—each stage well ahead of Ruth's level in his record year, 1927, when the Babe finished up with an amazing rush of seventeen homers in September—but long before he uncoiled on Stallard's fastball that final afternoon he knew that the new mark, if it came along, would be tainted in the books by an appended demeaning explanation that his sixty-one had been achieved over the course of a hundred-and-sixty-two-game season, as against Ruth's sixty in a hundred and fifty-four games. The famous asterisk (in truth, it has always been an annotation—a parenthetical "162 G/S" just after the number) remains in place in the game's two accepted record books, kept by the Elias Sports Bureau and by *The Sporting News*, although numerous other records established since that time (including stolen bases, at-bats, pitchers' strikeouts, saves, etc.) do not bear the ugly tick. The instigator was Commissioner Ford Frick, who brought forth the edict in July and then lobbied busily through the summer with repeated explanations to the vestals of the Baseball Writers Association that the holy Ruthian total would be "cheapened" by an unexplained larger figure established over an additional week of play—not quite a disinterested campaign, since Frick, a former sportswriter himself, had been a coeval and an adulating biographer of the Babe. It should also be recalled that the American League had added two new teams that selfsame summer, in the first major-league expansion of the century—the Los Angeles Angels and a reconstituted Washington Senators club—and "cheapening the game" was much in the minds of the columnists and the fans. When the thunderbolt of sixty-one homers arrived, moreover, it was launched by a player who had been a Yankee for only two seasons. If Mickey Mantle, a Yankee hero almost from his first days as a pinstriped rookie, had swatted the magic blow, many old-timers still believe, the New York front office would have raised an ungodly fuss over any diminishment of the new record, and it would have stood unsmirched, as it deserved. There is no wish here to revive the shoutings and buzzings that accompanied the Maris achievement thirty years back, but I think the present commissioner and some brave committee should meet one of these days and quietly wield an eraser, instead of waiting for some young slugger to come along and do it for them with his bat.

IN baseball's arithmetic, 1941 will always be the sum of fifty-six and .406: Joe DiMaggio's record fifty-six-game hitting streak that summer, coupled with Ted Williams' season's batting average, which he gloriously nailed up for all to see by choosing to play both ends of a doubleheader on the final day of the regular schedule. His option could have been to sit safely on the bench, nursing his .3996 average to date, which would have translated into an official .400—a platform unascended by any major-leaguer since Bill Terry batted .401 for the Giants, in 1930. The Kid, as every schoolboy from Presque Isle to Pelham used to know, went six for eight for the afternoon, against the Philadelphia Athletics: four singles, a double, and a home run. (The double, in the fourth inning of the nightcap, partly demolished a loudspeaker high on the wall in right center and fell back onto the playing field.) Both the DiMaggio and the Williams marks stand untouched to this day, a half-century later, although several gallant expeditions toward the .400 peak have been mounted in the interim, including Williams' own .388 in 1957, when he was thirty-nine years old. The DiMaggio streak looks safer: the premier one-season offensive record in the game.

Bobby Thomson's homer, the middle trophy on the shelf, is probably the least of the anniversary deeds—a single swing of the bat, as against the excruciating labors of two months (DiMaggio's fifty-six games stretched from May 15th to July 16th) or a full season's hacking—but its clarity and finality invite us wonderfully. Or invite *me*, I should say. Thinking about it this winter and trying to bring that day to mind called back other home runs as well—a couple at first, then ten or a dozen or more, some celebrated, some shrouded—which I had seen down the years and which had stayed with me, awaiting this nudge, it seemed, to sail into view once again. If these memoirs felt like short stories, for the reasons I have been suggesting here, they were also vivid and cheerful, and could all be told in the great lexicon of swat.



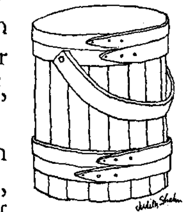
HOME RUN (nouns, verbs):

Homer, round-tripper, four-bagger, four-ply blow, clout, circuit clout, blast, dinger, downtowner, tater, long tater, shot, moon shot, slam (on occasion), grand slam, park one, lose one, crank one, clean the bases, gone, goner, outta here, going deep, took him (take him / took me) deep, Chinese homer, Ruthian wallop, Ballantine Blast, 800 number, Dial 8, day-tripper, still circling the airport, had a full crew and stewardesses (etc.), Federal Express, Domedong (Kingdome HR), Chicken on the Hill (Stargell HR at Three Rivers Stadium), street piece (out of the park, in Dennis Eckersley's language), walk-off piece (also Eckersleyesque, meaning pitcher has nothing else to do but walk off the field), etc., etc.

WITH these exclamatory sounds filling my head, I travelled about in Arizona and Florida this spring, and, once the season began, in some Northern parks, talking to baseball people, past and present, and asking them the same thing: "Tell me a homer." Then I would say that I was not just in search of monuments—all-timers like the Thomson or Maris pokes, Gabby Hartnett's ancient homer in the gloaming, Bill Mazeroski's Series winner against the 1960 Yankees, Carlton Fisk's Game Sixer in 1975, or Kirk Gibson's ninth-inning stunner against the Oakland Athletics three years ago, and the rest—or even the longest homers my deponents had witnessed. Any homer would do—whatever came to mind. (I talked to a lot of writers and media people, too; beat people have seen as much baseball as anyone, and they like to talk about it sometimes, once their deadlines have gone by.) As it turned out, we always seemed to get around to the historic pokes and the monsters in due course, but there were plenty of others, of every degree and distance, ready at hand. And each tale, I noticed (getting out my notebook), began with a smile.

"Any homer?" said Tracy Ringolsby, the Dallas *Morning News* national baseball writer. "Bo Jackson's against Nolan, two years ago. I think it was during the Royals' first swing south, probably in May. Ryan had struck him out the first five or six times he'd faced him, and the first time Bo ever makes contact he hits the longest home run in Arlington Stadium history."

We were standing in the bright sunlight in front of the Giants' dugout, before a game in Scottsdale, along with another writer friend, Vern Plagenhoef, of the Booth papers.



"Mine is Kirk Gibson's in the last game of the '84 Series, against the Padres," Plagenhoef said when his turn came. "He'd already had a great day, you remember, and when he comes up to bat against Goose Gossage, with two men on and first base open, you know they're going to put him on. But Gossage has a different idea. Dick Williams"—Williams was the Padres skipper—"is waving four fingers, but Goose just stands there. Dick goes out to talk to him, and Sparky is yelling out to Kirk, 'They don't want to walk you!' He can't *believe* it—nobody can. But Goose wins the argument somehow, and Gibson hits the ball into the upper deck there at Tiger Stadium, and comes around and jumps up and down on home plate about six times in that wild, wild scene. Maybe it's not as big as Gibson's pinch-hit shot against Eckersley out at Dodger Stadium, but this is the one I think of first. It was the one lively thing in that whole Series, except for the cab catching fire outside the stadium."

"Does batting practice count?" Ringolsby asked. "Just this once? O.K., then there's Pete Incaviglia's first at-bat of the year at Pompano, in '86. Pete's late getting to camp—he's a rookie, and most of us have never seen him—and on his first turn in the cage his manager, Bobby Valentine, is throwing B.P. First swing, Pete knocks the ball on a line down the right-field line and through the wooden fence out there. Not exactly a home run, but it sure had that feel. The wall was rotten, it turned out, and all that spring the visiting players and writers kept stopping by and looking at the place, and picking more pieces out, for souvenirs. By the end of the month, you could put your head through the hole. It had become a legend."

By the way, Dan Shaughnessy, of the Boston *Globe*, believes that the Gibson homer against Dennis Eckersley would be universally ranked as the game's greatest if it had happened in the last game of a World Series instead of the first. "It also came on a Saturday night," he said to me. "The worst time in the world for deadlines, and everybody had to rewrite. I had a whole piece done about how the Dodgers were only the latest in a succession of National League fraud teams in the Series, and all that, but I hadn't pushed the button yet, so I was able to kill it. That home run came along after 'The Natural' had been playing around the country, you know, so the wounded Kirk Gibson gimping up to the plate was like Roy Hobbs come to life. It still feels like a miracle."

Baseball memories leap over decades at a single bound, and long-flown afternoons return without effort, often in the heroic present tense. The flight feels easy if you're talking to Jim Kaat, who is an announcer for CBS these days but looks very much the way he did when he was the No. 1 starter for the Twins, a couple of decades ago—ochre-freckled, tall and intense, with farmer cheekbones and a high, thick chest.

"I'm pitching against the Yankees, up at the Stadium," Kaat said to me in Port St. Lucie. "This is in 1967, the year we lost the pennant to the Red Sox on the very last day, but this game was way earlier. I've got the Yankees beat, 1–0, two out in the ninth, and Mantle's the hitter. The count goes to three and one. I thought about pitching carefully and maybe putting him on, but Elston Howard was on deck, and he was always more dangerous for me than Mantle. Well, I challenged Mickey. You remember in the old Stadium it was still four hundred and fifty-seven feet to the auxiliary scoreboard in left field? That's where he hit it. The game was tied now, and we got rained out in the tenth. We came back a month later, and, ironically, I was the pitcher in the makeup game, against Steve Barber, and I lost, 1–0. When you lose a pennant by one game, you

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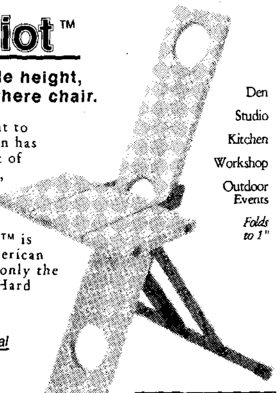

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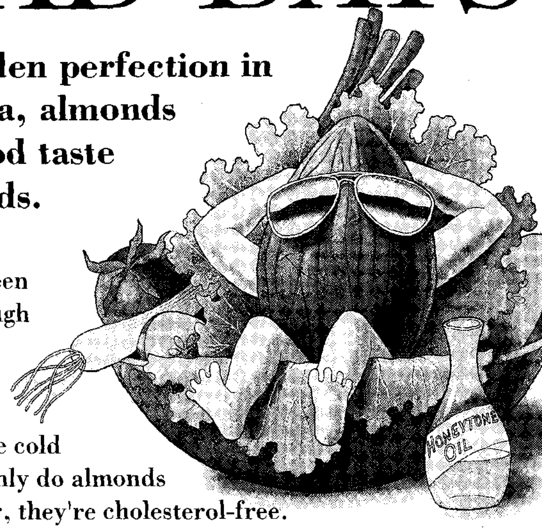
pick out moments to do over, and I always go back to Mantle. That one pitch . . ."

Instinctively, I avoided consulting many pitchers about homers, perhaps sensing that joy, rather than pain and suffering, was my aim on this particular swing. Rick Sutcliffe, the towering Cubs mound veteran, solved the matter by dredging up a home run that he had whacked in 1979 against "some pitcher named Tom Seaver" when he himself was pitching for the Dodgers. "Luck was the reason," Sutcliffe explained. "Home runs hit against me?" he went on. "Can't remember any—not one." And he walked away.

Dave Righetti, looking boyish and relaxed in his snowy new Giants habiliments (he departed the Bronx as a free agent this winter, after a decade of notable work as a Yankee starter and stopper), offered me a grand slam he surrendered to George Bell, in Toronto, a few summers back. "We were leading by 8–1, so I wasn't expecting to come into the game at all," Rags said. "I threw a slider, and after George hit it out Donnie Denkinger, the home-plate ump, held on to the new ball until all four guys had crossed the plate. An umpire with a conscience will always give the new ball to the pitcher right away under those circumstances. Let him walk it off, you know. But their people are high-fiving and jumping around, and I'm still standing out there with my glove up. When he finally flips me the ball, I said '*Here's your ball!*' and I threw it into the right-field stands. I remember that one pretty well, I guess."

Righetti's new skipper, Roger Craig—a pitcher long before he became a manager—told me that it was his habit never to look around when he'd been taken deep: the sound alone gave him all the news he needed. "I could even tell if a ball was going to hit the fence on the fly or one-hop it," he said. Roger, a non-participant Dodger on this occasion, had an excellent view of the Eddie Roebuck sinkerball that Joe Adcock hit over the high-rise left-field roof at Ebbets Field—a first ever, he believes. A little earlier, before Craig's time, the tall and powerful Adcock (he was a famous guess hitter) had driven a pitch by the Giants' Jim Hearn into the center-field bleachers at the Polo Grounds, above a considerable wall four hundred and eighty feet away



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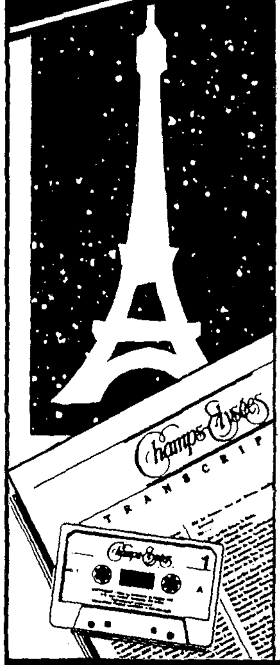


from home plate—a feat previously accomplished only by Luke Easter, in a Negro League game. As we know, Craig later toiled for the newborn Mets in 1962 and '63 (losing twenty-four and then twenty-two games in the process), which meant that he was on hand, though not in the box scores, when Lou Brock (a Cub at the time) and then the Braves' Henry Aaron drove the only other bleacher-shot home runs at the Polo Grounds—on successive days, in June, 1962. Craig mentioned this stunner to me almost as an aside, and then hurried along to other parks and bombs of yesteryear; I think he was still embarrassed for his fellow-pitchers and fellow-Mets.

THE prime first-in-a-career home run in the books also happened at the Polo Grounds—a modest clout by Hoyt Wilhelm, the Hall of Fame knuckleballer, against the Braves on his very first major-league at-bat, in 1952. It has probably remained clear in Wilhelm's memory, since he went on to pitch in a thousand and sixty-nine more games—a total unmatched by any pitcher to date—and never hit another. But it's probably safe to say that every major-leaguer keeps a firm hold, in memory, on his maiden downtowner. Al Rosen, the Giants' general manager, told me that his had come on Opening Day in 1950, in Cleveland, when he had just taken over as the starting third baseman for the Tribe. His distinguished predecessor at the corner, Ken Keltner, had been released the week before, so Rosen was aware that he was under considerable scrutiny from the home-town fans. (The Indians, I feel forced to explain, were a baseball power in those days, having won a pennant two years before and finished third in '49.) In the eighth inning, with his team down by two runs, Rosen got around on a waste pitch thrown by the Tiger starter, Freddy Hutchinson, and put it into the seats. Hutchinson, a celebrated sorehead of his time, followed Rosen around the bases, shouting imprecations. "When I crossed the plate, he was still right behind me," Rosen said. " 'You hear me, don't you, you bush bastard?' he yelled, and I said, 'Yes, Mr. Hutchinson, I hear you,' and I went back to the bench and sat down. Quite a feeling." Rosen, it might be noted, upset some other pitchers that season, when he went on to whack thirty-six more dingers—a record for rookies in the American League that stood for thirty-seven years.

Another day, another Giant. Will Clark, asked for the first home run that came to mind, gave me a burning stare (he looks this way all the time) and said, "Easy. My first at-bat in the big leagues. Opening Day—April 8, 1986, in Houston. One out, one-and-one count. Third pitch, first inning, Nolan Ryan. My mom and dad were in the stands. Solo shot—center field. Not a bad way to enter the big leagues."

"Wow!" I said. "Can you think of any other homers you've hit?"

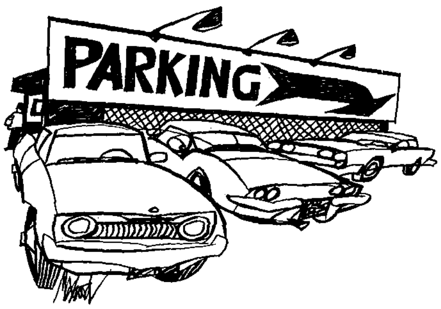
"Sure," Clark said. "A bunch of them—only, you said one. Right?"

"Right," I said. "Yup. Thanks."

Bill Rigney is more of a long talker. When he was an infielder for the New York Giants, he roomed with the Big Cat, Johnny Mize, on the road, and he still cheerfully claims to be a co-holder of the "Most Home Runs, Roommates" record—one stat not to be found in the books. Mize, a beefy first baseman, smacked fifty-one in 1947, while Rig, who is built (in his phrase) more like a 2-iron, crashed through with seventeen; it was a career year in this category for them both.

At dinner one night in Scottsdale, Rigney regaled me with accounts of several Harmon Killebrew blasts (Rig was Killebrew's manager on the Twins in the early seventies), including one in Cleveland on a day when the Indians' Sudden Sam McDowell seemed to have the visitors in hand in the ninth, with a one-run lead. "We've got a man on second, Harmon is the batter, and Oliva's on deck," Rigney said. "Alvin Dark, their manager, calls time and runs out to the mound and *says something to Sam*. Then he runs back, and before he gets his foot back in the dugout Killebrew hits it over the center-field fence. You know, I keep meaning to ask Alvin what it was he said out there."

A day or two later, Rig came up to me at the ballpark in Phoenix (he is the senior baseball adviser to the Athletics) and asked if I wanted to hear about a minor-league home run he'd just recalled.



"Are you in this story?" I asked.

"How'd you guess?" he said.

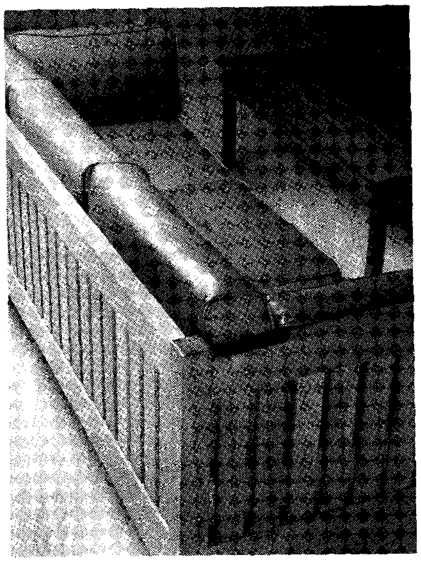
It was in the American Association in 1955. Rigney, a young player-manager—he was thirty-seven years old—had the Minneapolis Millers in first place, riding an eight-game winning streak. The Toledo Mud Hens were leading in this tilt, however, when the Millers put a couple of men on in the ninth, causing the Toledo manager to opt for a change of pitchers. The man out of the bullpen, it turned out, was Monk Meyer, a right-hander whom Rigney had batted against more than once in the majors, when Meyer pitched for the Phillies. "I'm coaching third base," Rigney told me. "But I come walking back to the dugout while he's warming up. We had a couple of left-handed pinch-hitters, and each one is looking at me, thinking, Is it me? Is it *him?* But I say, 'I'll handle this one myself, boys,' and I take a bat and go out there. We had this very short right-field fence there at the old Nicollet Park, and—well, the very first pitch, I hit it out. Which meant our ninth win, and we go on to win eight more in a row, seventeen straight. When I got to home plate, there was quite a crowd, you know, but in all that noise I heard our second-string catcher say, 'Well, now we've seen *everything.*' "

LAST-EVER homers stay in mind, too, and the one we should find room for here was Babe Ruth's, which he knocked on Saturday, May 25, 1935, against the Pittsburgh Pirates, eight days before he hung up his spikes for good. Ruth was forty years old by this time and, worn and embittered, had gone off to play for the Boston Braves. Nothing worked out for him there except this one afternoon, when he hit a single and three home runs. The third—Ruth's farewell and his famous No. 714—flew over the double-decked stands in right field and out of the park, a feat never previously accomplished at Forbes Field. I have written about this shot before, I believe, and probably will again. It is his greatest. (I have not overlooked Ruth's called-shot home run in the World Series of 1932, but the burden of evidence—most of all, the evidence of game stories written at Wrigley Field that day—suggests that Ruth, instead of gesturing to the place he would hit the ball, actually held up one and then two outstretched fingers to the Cubs pitcher, Charlie Root, in accompaniment with the first and second called strikes during that raucous at-bat. Then he hit the next delivery into the center-field stands. It was a brash and brilliant deed, but probably not quite the legend that almost immediately sprang into being—and that the Babe was smart enough never to deny.)

My own boyhood memories of the Babe include several home runs, but none of them of truly Brobdingnagian proportions. Indeed, they most resembled lofty fly balls that simply declined to come down and, eventually running out of field room, fell among the straw-hatted gents in the right-field stands or the bleachers. (Sometimes in those days you'd see the businessmen-fans still coming into the Stadium in the fourth or fifth inning, with the *World-Telegram* or the *Sun* tucked under their arms; games started at three-fifteen in the afternoon back then, and moved along briskly enough to get everyone home in plenty of time for supper.)

Hank Aaron, who surpassed Ruth's lifetime total in 1974 and went on to establish the present summit of seven hundred and fifty-five home runs, was more celebrated for his consistency and his persevering power than for awesome distant shots; he also holds the record marks for lifetime runs batted in and extra-base hits. Although he was capable of the occasional scary poke, as Roger Craig had observed that day at the Polo Grounds, Aaron's wristy, late swing tended to impart backspin to the ball, which made for line drives rather than the towering rainmakers that characterized the work of Mantle, Killebrew, and Frank Howard, to name but a few. Photos of these thick, granitic figures at the apex of their upbound swings all show a planted, columnar front leg, with every other part of the body pulling back violently against the hawser line of the bat and the now departed ball; that deep-dug front leg and the heaving, upraised arms make them look like anchor men on a tug-of-war team. Ted Williams, in his classic text, "The Science of Hitting," extolls a slight upswing in midstroke, because it increases the area of solid contact with the pitched ball. Tony Kubek, talking with me up at Yankee Stadium not long ago (he does the Yankee games on local cable television now), made the same point about swinging up and *through* the ball as a means of imparting topspin, which results in a drive that seems to bite through the air, almost accelerating upward as it heads away and perhaps out. "That phrase 'a quick bat' means nothing, you know," he said. "But a bat that swings through the ball and *looks as if it stays in contact* is what does the trick. You saw that with Mantle all the time. It sounds impossible, but after he hit one you had the feeling that the ball and the bat had been together forever, there in the middle of the swing. Hank Aaron was the other way. Most of his homers stayed low, because of his style—low and long. Which tells something about the kind of power he had."

Hank Aaron's No. 715—the homer that broke the known-by-heart Ruthian lifetime record total that had stood for almost four decades—was hit in the fourth inning of a Braves home game on April 8th, 1974 (Al Downing, the Dodger left-hander, was the hittee), and what struck me about it, aside from its glory, was the fact that the outfield at Atlanta Fulton County Stadium had already been primped up with a memorial decoration, painted on the grass, celebrating the event in advance. Hank's total had stood at seven hundred and thirteen at the end of play in 1973, when he had wafted forty homers all told, so a very early date with the record books the following spring was a certainty. Aaron hit the tying blow on April 4th, at Cincinnati, and the Braves then played two more road games in Cincinnati, while the Braves front office held its breath, in the horrid thought that the grand deed might be committed out there, far from the panting sellout home-town hordes. When the famous ball did go out—I was watching at home, along with the rest of America—play was stopped for eleven minutes, for speeches and photos and tears down by home plate: a separately sponsored pause in mid-game that startled me more than the historic dinger itself. The P.R.-enhanced record-breaking event, a staple of modern sports, had been born, and we have seen its like



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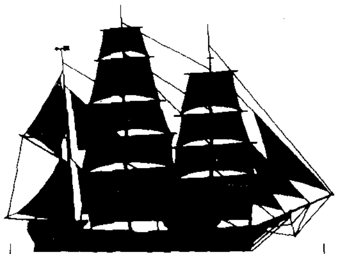

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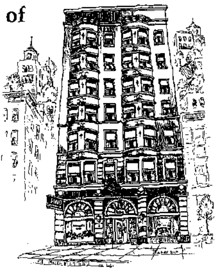

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often since then, I'm sorry to say—most recently when Rickey Henderson broke Lou Brock's lifetime stolen-base record out in Oakland, earlier this month. Records are part of the game, to be sure, but to me these All-Time ceremonials feel as flat and as tacky as Mother's Day.

(A very different variety of home run might also be mentioned here, in passing—the Never Was. One well-known former big-leaguer told me in some detail about a home run of his that I found sufficiently interesting to make me write it up for this piece. The only thing wrong with it, a regretful fact checker later discovered, was that it never happened—a soaring deed that went from legend to myth in midair.)

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We couldn't tell if it was a fire in the hills
Or the hills themselves on fire, smoky yet
Incandescent, too far away to comprehend.
And all this time we were travelling toward
Something vaguely burning in the distance—
A shadow on the horizon, a fault line—
A blue and cloudy peak which never seemed
To recede or get closer as we approached.
And that was all we knew about it
As we stood by the window in a waning light
Or touched and moved away from each other
And turned back to our books. But it remained
Even so, like the thought of a coal fading
On the upper left-hand side of our chests,
A destination that we bore within ourselves.
And there were those—were they the lucky ones?—
Who were unaware of rushing toward it.
And the blaze awaited them, too.

—Edward Hirsch

• •

HOMERS were not the only thing I looked for in spring training this year, or the only reward that came my way. There were some dazzling young arms on view, for one thing—several of them on the Oakland roster. I was on hand when Todd Van Poppel, the prime teen-age flinger in the land, worked three scoreless middle innings against the Indians one afternoon, and I had the prickling sensation that I might be in on the first page of a baseball biography that could stretch well into the next century. Van Poppel had dazzled the scouts as a Texas schoolboy, but was passed over by thirteen teams in the 1990 draft, since he had announced that he was determined to attend the University of Texas (a college baseball power) before launching a pro career. The Athletics, when their turn came, persuaded him that their illustrious combination of coaching and patient development, along with the equally admired color of their cash, coupled with a somewhat delayed college matriculation, might be the best choice after all. Out on the mound, in person, Van Poppel was a lanky six feet five, with a pleasing, flowing right-handed motion that delivered the fastball flickingly into the upper sectors of the strike zone. He worked quickly, and although he appeared to aim the ball now and then, as youngsters will, even those pitches had movement, a life of their own, as they crossed the plate. He fell behind, 2-1, to one batter (it was Albert Belle) and then just missed with a breaking ball; then he threw *another* curveball, a strike, which Belle popped foul for the out. Dave Duncan, Von Poppel's pitching coach, told me later that he'd never seen a pitcher as advanced for his years or with such a properly constructed, strain-free motion. I asked Dunc what he projected for Van Poppel down the line—he won't turn twenty until December—but he declined temptation. "I don't want to say it yet," he said apologetically. "It wouldn't—" He shook his head, dismissing visions.

Van Poppel went down to Huntsville, the Oakland Class AA farm, as planned, when the season started, but four other rookies found their way onto the big team's pitching roster—a surprising turn of events for a deep-founded championship club of this calibre. The best of these could be Kirk Dressendorfer, a chunky, slope-shouldered righty who *did* pitch for the University of Texas, and who showed enough this spring to qualify as the Athletics' No. 4 starter, after a prior lifetime total of nineteen innings in professional ball. Young arms can evanesce, as Dave Duncan seemed to be telling me, and if I were a serious prognosticator I could easily fudge a bit here by also mentioning Steve Chitren or Dana Allison or Joe Slusarski, the other Oakland baby boomers. The way baseball is, we might know all of these pitchers by heart five years from now, or none of them.

The best new name this year was the Cubs' Heathcliff Slocumb, a mammoth righty who throws in the middle-90-m.p.h. range. He was cuffed about on a couple of outings I happened to see, causing me to believe he might soon be headed back to the Peniston Crags for further seasoning, but he, too, made the cut and has already worked some useful innings at Wrigley Field. Another newcomer for the Cubs is Gary Scott, their rookie third baseman, who played college ball at Villanova; he has reddish-blond hair and an engaging, confident grin—he looks like the brash second lead in an M-G-M kid musical. That notation stayed in my book until, on a second visit, I saw Scott rip a double against the Mariners one afternoon, and I went back and wrote "Can play" beside it.

The youngest looks of all belonged to the two new Mets lefties, Pete Schourek and Doug Simons, who both made the jump up to the Shea bullpen this year, at the ages of twenty-one and twenty-four, respectively. Schourek, who is tall and large, lost a season to elbow surgery three years ago, but is projected as an almost sure starter down the line. Simons is the opposite—a hundred-and-seventy-pound sinker-slider sort of operative, whose slinky, around-the-corners stuff will probably work best when immediately succeeding seven innings of David Cone heat, let's say. Simons reminds you of the editor of the high-school newspaper—an unthreatening game face that he is quite aware of, and that he believes may work in his favor. "Every manager who sees me pitch is thinking, *This kid is about to get shelled*, and every batter I beat goes back to the dugout saying, '*I just missed*,'" he said at Port St. Lucie. I got the impression that the Mets management felt just this way when watching Simons at work, but he kept the visiting hitters muttering, and made the varsity after all.

All this Young America pitching was wonderfully cheering to me, in a year otherwise notable for some ungodly sulkings and stompings about by a few celebrated older (one can't exactly say grownup) stars and mainstays—Rickey Henderson, Barry Bonds, Bobby Bonilla, and two or three others—whose contracts did not have them exactly in their proper slots among the upper millionaires in the business. Everyone was making so much money, immense amounts of it—the average major-league salary now stands at eight hundred and ninety thousand dollars, and two hundred and twenty-three players are earning a million or more per year—and so few were apparently enjoying it that I could only murmur Zippy the Pinhead's "Are we having fun yet?" to myself, in an attempt to avoid moral conclusions. The money, of course, comes from the lavish television-network revenues now shared by the clubs, and the salary prices are being set, after all, by the owners, so it doesn't make much sense for us fans to lecture all these young men in our minds when a handful of them turn grouchy in the parking lot on the way toward their Porsches.

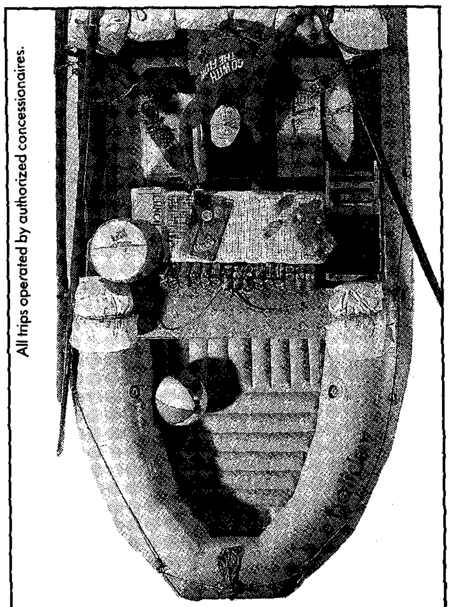
If we need a happier vision, we might think of the exquisite gratitude of some older ballplayers who have kept their stroke down the years and who find a fresh place for themselves in some lineup as another season gets under way. Let's think of The Daves, then—a mighty apparition I found playing for the Angels one day in Arizona. This creature has close to forty-eight hundred major-league games to its credit, spanning thirty-four and a half seasons. It stands twelve feet eleven inches high and weighs four hundred and ninety-six pounds—and still runs pretty well, considering its seventy-eight years. What is it? Why, it's Dave Winfield and Dave Parker, who suddenly came together in the middle of the Angels' batting order after a mid-March trade that brought Parker over from the Brewers, in exchange for Dante Bichette. It was a treat to see those two celebrated massive boppers together, grinning and whaling, back to back, in a game against the Athletics, and clearly enjoying the phenomenon of themselves conjoined for the first time in our appreciation. I couldn't think of any other two players on a team who—in spite of different strokes and varying histories—matched up in such startling, mirrorlike fashion. Winfield, who bats right-handed, goes six feet six inches—an inch the taller; Parker, the lefty swinger, weighs two hundred and fifty-four pounds the heavier. They came up to the big leagues within three weeks of each other, in midseason of 1973 (Winfield with the Padres, Parker with the Pirates), and both will turn forty later this summer. Both have come through some dark days—Parker as a central figure in the Pittsburgh drug trials several years ago; Winfield during his seamy wranglings with George Steinbrenner—but have more recently come back into the sunshine and the forgiveness of the fans. Parker won two batting titles and an M.V.P. award in his prime, but Winfield, in spite of missing the entire season of 1989 after back surgery, has hit fifty more home runs than the Cobra (378 to 328) and has driven in eighty-two more runs. But these are the opposite of differences, as baseball stats are measured—you could put them in your eye, I mean—and if I owned the Minnesota Twins I'd be on the phone day and night just now, trying to swing a deal for the twin Daves. In the game I saw, Winfield ripped two doubles and drove in three runs (against Bob Welch), while Parker mashed a double and a pair of home runs, one of them the game winner. Four days after the regular season began, Winfield went five for five (with six runs batted in and fifteen total bases) in a game at the Metrodome; three of the hits were home runs.

THEME: Sox Socks.

Time & Place: 9 A.M., Winter Haven, Fl.

Characters: Mahogany-toned Red Sox alumni, here as spring coaches, happy as quahogs.

Johnny Pesky (*he is seventy-one, still with an infielder's narrow frame and alert gaze*): "When I came up as a rookie in '42, Ted Williams was already there. They put me batting ahead of him in the lineup, and sometimes in a close game he'd say, 'Get on, Johnny, and I'll hit one off this



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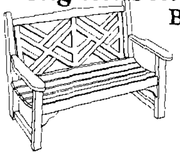

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guy.' Then he'd *do* it. I know he hit one like that off Hank Borowy, in Yankee Stadium, and one against Allie Reynolds—two that come to mind. Nobody else would say anything like that. Unusual man."

Frank Malzone (*twelve years at third base, twenty years of scouting; sixty-one years old*): "The one I hit in the All-Star Game in 1959, off Don Drysdale. Third or fourth inning—something like that. It was at the old Coliseum, in L.A. Rocky Colavito and Yogi Berra also hit home runs for the American League in that game. Three home runs, all by Italians."

Carl Yastrzemski (*the one and only*): "Of my own? I guess the one I hit that tied up the game in Detroit, a couple of weeks before the end in 1967. There was one out in the top of the ninth, and we were in that tough, tough pennant race."

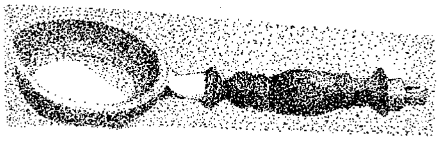
I remembered the moment. This was the same wild September in the American League that Jim Kaat had talked about—a scramble that ended with the Red Sox edging out the Twins and the Tigers on the final Sunday. Down the stretch, Yaz had carried the Sox with one of the great sustained bursts of individual slugging that the game has seen—a performance that won him a Most Valuable Player award later that year. Standing behind me up in the Tiger Stadium press box was Clif Keane, a wry longtime beat writer with the *Globe*, and as we watched Yaz step up to bat in that ninth-inning crisis he growled, "Go on, prove you're the M.V.P. Prove it to *me*. Hit a homer." Yaz hit the homer.

As might be expected, I won't be able to find room here for more than a handful of the game's all-time homers, or anything like all the great sluggers who hit them. Mike Schmidt and Frank Robinson aren't here, as they should be, and Willie Stargell surely deserves a further and more fervent accolade; I meant to cite Dick Allen and Ralph Kiner, too, of course. Nor will I find space to say what I'd wish to about sterling current practitioners like Eddie Murray, Andre Dawson, Dewey Evans, Jack Clark, and the others. As it has turned out, some of the friends and players I bothered with my questions must be left out, for lack of room, and their favorite downtowners along with them. Here, in any case, are the premier home-run hitters—the lifetime leaders—and their totals:

Hank Aaron	755
Babe Ruth	714
Willie Mays	660
Frank Robinson	586
Harmon Killebrew	573
Reggie Jackson	563
Mike Schmidt	548
Mickey Mantle	536
Jimmy Foxx	534
Ted Williams	521

Willie Mays, sole proprietor of the six-hundred level in this distinguished edifice, still looked loose when he once again came to Scottsdale for the spring semester as some kind of coach for the Giants. (One Giants official, asked by a visiting TV reporter for Mays' job description, said, "Willie's work here is to be Willie Mays.") Some mornings, you could hear Mays' boyish, high-voiced, jabbering way of talking even before you got through the tunnel into the clubhouse, and you'd find him in there perhaps autographing boxes of team baseballs at a table while he agitated with the clubhouse man and anybody else around. Each day, he wore a faded pink polo shirt with "Say Hey" over the breast. He looked his age—he just turned sixty—but you could still see the thick muscles under the now softer skin of his forearms. He was a little impatient when I asked him to remember a home run for me—I hadn't stopped to think what sort of catalogue selection this would entail—but then he said, "Home run against Claude Raymond, in the Astrodome. Somebody was on first, and it tied the game. Jim Davenport won it for us in the eleventh or twelfth inning. Raymond threw me thirteen fastballs, and I fouled them off. The ball went over the fence in left-center field. What *year*? You'd have to look that up. Ask Claude Raymond—he probably knows it better than I do. That was the only dramatic type of home run I ever hit."

Tracking this one down took a while, but the trip was worth it. Lon Simmons, a handsome, deep-voiced veteran California broadcaster, vividly remembered the confrontation and its result, and said he thought that the blow had been Mays' six-hundredth round-tripper. Not quite, it turned out. No. 600, on September 22, 1969, was in fact a game-winning pinch-hit job, down in San Diego, when Mays batted for George Foster and hit one out against a rookie pitcher named Mike Corkins.



"Why'd it have to be me?" Corkins said disconsolately to his manager, Preston Gomez, after the game. (I found the tale in Charles Einstein's book "Willie's Time.")

"Son," Gomez said gently, "there've been five hundred and ninety-nine before you."

I continued the quest over the telephone once I got home, helped immeasurably by a bulldog Giants media person at Candlestick Park. "What about this one?" she said, evidently consulting some thick Book of Willie out there by the Bay. "August 29, 1965—a three-run homer against Jack Fisher, of the Mets, in the ninth inning. It was Willie's seventeenth of the month."

"Sorry," I said. "It's got to be in Houston."

"Hmmm. Well— Oop, how about June 13, 1967? Mays failed as a pinch-hitter in the sixth inning, in Houston, but stayed in the game and won it with a grand slam against Barry Latman. It was his first slam since '62."

"Wrong pitcher," I said. "It *sounds* exciting, but who are we to say?"

There was another pause, and then she had it. The homer, Willie's No. 501, had indeed tied up the game, just as Mays told me, in the Astrodome on September 14, 1965—a fearsome month in the National League, I recalled, when the Giants had fought off two or three closely pursuing clubs, only to fall to the Dodgers near the end. Mays, going for the fences in the ninth, had become "embroiled in a prolonged battle with reliever Claude Raymond," my faraway researcher read aloud, and had fouled off four pitches before "sending the ball soaring four hundred feet over the center-field fence." Davenport's pinch-hit single then won the game, in the twelfth.

Four foul balls? I went to Claude Raymond, just as Willie had told me to in the first place. Possibly the only Quebec-born right-hander yet to attain the majors (Denis Boucher, a *habitant* rookie twirler with the Blue Jays, throws left and *bats* right), Raymond had wound up his career, predictably enough, with the Montreal

Expos in 1971, and had then stayed on as a color commentator for that club. I called him at home, and he remembered the moment at once.

"I threw Mays thirteen straight fastballs," he said, even before I could ask. "And he fouled off thirteen. Jay Alou was the base runner on first, and Mays was up there to hit a home run. All those fouls were nicks or little ticks back to the screen—nothing close to a base hit. Then I threw one more, a little inside, and Willie bailed out but opened up on the ball at the same time, the way only he could do, and it went out. I remember Paul Richards, our general manager, came up to me afterward and said how happy he was I'd gone fastball all the way. He said it was a great duel."

I told Raymond that Mays had described it as the only dramatic home run of his career.

"Well, it's a great compliment," Raymond said, in his pleasing North Gaul tones. "You can thank him for me."

Willie was right about the thirteen fouls, after all, but perhaps we can quarrel with him just the same. David Bush covers the Athletics for the San Francisco *Chronicle*, and when I asked him to remember a homer for me he came up with a long standoff game he'd listened to at home, on the radio, back when he was a freshman at U. Cal, in 1963. "That game matched up Juan Marichal, of the Giants, against Warren Spahn, and it went on interminably," Bush said. "No score after nine innings, no score after twelve. Both the starting pitchers stayed in there. I was a Giants fan, of course, but by this time I was rooting for Spahn, because of who he was and because he was just about at the end of his career. Willie beat him, 1–0, with a homer in the bottom of the fifteenth. I didn't see it, but I still feel as if I *almost* saw it. It was that kind of a hit."

David's story reminded me of something, and when I got home I dug out my files of the *SABR Bulletin*, a useful newsletter published for members of the Society for American Baseball Research. There, in the February, 1991, issue, I reconfirmed the news: Willie Mays is the only major-league ballplayer to have hit a home run in every inning from the first through the sixteenth; moreover, he leads all comers with twenty-two lifetime extra-inning home

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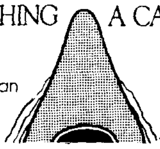

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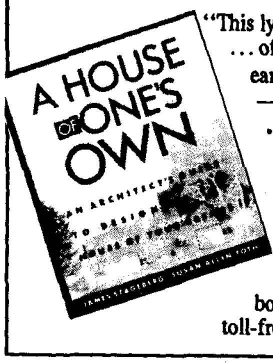

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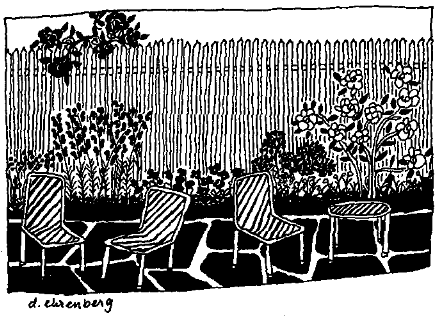
runs. (Jack Clark is second, with seventeen.) Too bad none of them were dramatic.

THE longest home run I've ever seen—the longest, easily—was a 1975 spring-training space vehicle launched by Dave Kingman, of the Mets, against the Yankees' Catfish Hunter one night at Fort Lauderdale. Everyone who was there still remembers the moment and talks about it happily when the subject comes up. Both principals had joined a Gotham club that winter—Hunter coming over from the World Champion Oakland A's, and Kingman from the Giants—and there was a sizable media horde on hand when Kingman got around on an offspeed Hunter delivery in the first inning. The ball went over the left-field fence about three palm trees high (or so I described it in this space, a bit later). Mickey Mantle, on hand that evening as a Yankee batting coach, said that he'd never seen a longer blow, and Yankee manager Bill Virdon, reminding us that there was another full diamond out there beyond the main field, ventured that the ball had been a simultaneous homer here and double next door.

Others among my collection of grandmaster dingers sometimes waver in clarity or relative merit, I've noticed, but Reggie Jackson's third homer of the night against the Dodgers in the final game of the 1977 World Series has not lost its lustre. As most of us surely remember, he whacked the three in consecutive at-bats, each against a different pitcher and each on the very first pitch. The feat still seems unimaginable, but that third home run would have been special even as a solitaire. It came against the Dodger knuckleballer Charlie Hough, and landed deep in the uninhabited sector of the center-field bleachers (the black "batter's eye" background), where it bounced around in celebratory fashion—an enormous shot. Fran Healy, a teammate of Reggie's on that club, keeps that homer at the top of his own lifetime chart. "The thing people don't know about Reggie is that he was a great knuckleball hitter," he told me. "I don't know how you can do that, because that pitch has no pattern, you know, but Reggie always knew how to handle it, somehow. *Oh*, was that ball hit!"

Like other long-term baseball writers, I have had a firsthand view of many of the other celebrated late-season and post-season home runs of the past three decades, but, in common with every sports fan, I have noticed that their very celebrity—in particular, their numbingly repeated reappearances in video-clip on my home screen—eventually drains them of meaning and emotion. Carlton Fisk's twelfth-inning shot in Game Six of the 1975 World Series now feels like Jimmy Stewart's tearful late homecoming in "It's a Wonderful Life"; and similar fabulous blows, such as Kirk Gibson's previously cited game winner in the 1988 Series, Dave Henderson's stunner against the Angels in the '86 American League playoff, and Bucky Dent's little sailer into the screen at Fenway Park which destroyed the Red Sox in a one-game playoff in '78, are in danger of similar Hallmarking. Only a deliberate effort of memory and imagination—a private revisiting of the scene, so to speak—can sometimes bring them back into view for an instant or two.

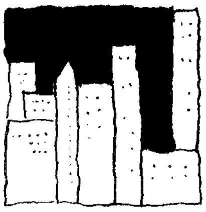
The blurring of these thrilling moments because of overexposure is a shame, but there is probably no help for it. Hollywood historians still bemoan the loss of hundreds of early movie classics that fell to dust because they were shot on unstable nitrate film, but I have sometimes perversely wished that our sports footage could suffer the same fate, so that we might again learn to rely on memory as a depository for our most precious games. One night at Yankee Stadium last month, when the White Sox were in town, I asked Carlton Fisk whether that ceaselessly replayed scene of his gyrations along the first-base line as he watched his Game Six homer go up and out on that long-ago night had not come to replace his own memories of the moment, and he said, "You know, I'll bet you I haven't viewed it more than four or five times, for just that reason. I turn it off or go out of the room whenever it comes along, because I want to keep it fresh in my head. I try not to talk about it or to answer questions about it, either. I want to keep hold of the memory of what it felt like, as opposed to what it looks like on the screen. Maybe there'll come a time later on when I can be relaxed and think about it again on my own, but right now it's best to keep it enclosed."



Meantime, he said, he can dwell on a homer he smacked on August 17th last year—to set a new all-time record for all White Sox hitters, and simultaneously break Johnny Bench's record for most home runs by a catcher. Making a *new* memory may be the best trick of all.

MONSTERS still await us. On April 17, 1953, Mickey Mantle, batting right-handed, drilled a Chuck Stobbs pitch over the loudspeaker that stood above a high wall in dead center field at Griffith Stadium, in Washington, and out of the park. Later that day, the Yankee P.R. man, Red Patterson, went in search of the ball and claimed to have found its owner, a small boy, who pointed out the landing place, five hundred and sixty-five feet away from home plate. Beat writers of the day, knowing Patterson as a keen appreciator of a good headline, were skeptical (Patterson had forehandedly brought along a fresh ball and a few bucks to swap for the memento when the lad conveniently turned up), but no matter: the tape-measure homer had been born. Some sourball in the press box that famous afternoon complained that a breeze had been blowing out, helping Mantle's shot along, but Clark Griffith, the patriarch Senator owner, said, "Hell, the wind has been blowing out here for fifty years, and nobody ever did *that* before!"

Mantle, in any case, accounted for some other fabled flights during his eighteen years up in the Bronx. Some old teammates mention a homer that struck the Gem Razor billboard on top of the right-field bleachers, which barely averted its arrival on the El-station platform just beyond, but there's general agreement that his explosive, steeply rising drive against Bill Fischer, a right-handed pitcher with the Royals, on May 22, 1963, surpassed all. That home run, a solo shot, struck the green filigree-work just below the third-deck roof in right field (this was before the Stadium suffered its character-destroying modernization in the mid-seventies, when the upper roof and its frieze were taken down), and its height and distance, as depicted next to a thick, dotted flight path painted over a tabloid photograph of the day, are precise: three hundred and seventy-four feet out, a hundred and eight feet and one inch up. (I think I can almost remember this vivid pictograph on the back page of forty or fifty motion-trembling copies of the *News* in my car on the Lexington Avenue Express the next morning.) Two eyewitnesses told me about it this year. Tony La Russa, a teammate of Fischer's on the Royals back then, said, “We'd been agitating the heck out of him just before he crunched it. Eddie Lopat was our manager, and he was real upset. It made this loud noise”—he popped his hands together—“when it hit up there, and then we got real quiet. Nobody else I saw ever hit a ball like that.”



Tony Kubek, a Yankee teammate, was sitting closer but had an imperfect view of the event. “We all jumped off the bench to watch it go,” he said. “But it was hit so hard that the ball had bounced back down onto the grass before we could get to the top step of the dugout. Bang and it was over. I don't know if that was Mickey's longest ever, but it was the hardest-hit.”

Kubek told me that he had been talking with some members of the Toronto Blue Jays a couple of years ago, just after their first baseman, Fred McGriff, mashed a long homer into the upper reaches of the Stadium. They seemed to think it was an all-timer, but Kubek told them to imagine a ball hit ten or twenty rows farther back and then up to the level of the present light tower out there: that was the Mantle shot. They doubted him, so the next day he stopped by the Yankee offices and found the old photograph and took it down to the clubhouse, where it changed some minds. “ ‘Oh!’ they said,” Kubek reported. “ ‘Ohhhhh!’ ”

No one has ever hit a fair ball out of Yankee Stadium (except just possibly Josh Gibson, in a Negro League game in the thirties), but Clete Boyer vividly recalls a 1965 shot propelled by Frank Howard, of the Senators, that went completely over the left-field roof, down the line. The Yankee pitcher was Steve Hamilton. Boyer, who is currently a coach with the Columbus Clippers, was playing third base that day, and had a clear view. “I still keep telling people about it,” he said to me recently. “I've never seen a ball hit anywhere near that far. It was a lot longer to that left-field roof at the old Stadium than to anyplace in the stands in right, of course.”

But was it a fair ball, I wanted to know.

“I wanted the ump to call it fair,” Boyer said sadly. “I wished it at the time, even though Frank was playing for the other guys. But, truthfully, it hooked at the last minute and went out about two feet foul.”

Another drive that sticks in mind here, even after half a century, went the other way: a foul ball that was called a homer by the umpire, with chaotic results. It came during a tense July, 1939, series between the Giants and the rising Cincinnati Reds, up at the Polo Grounds. Somewhere in midgame—I was there, a more youthful me—Harry Craft, a Redleg outfielder, hit a ball into the left-field upper deck, where it was caught by a front-row patron sitting two seats on the wrong side of the foul pole. The ump, Lee Ballanfant, gave it the home-run arm twirl, and two or perhaps three Cincinnati runs came around. Billy Jurges, the Giants' shortstop, went berserk, screaming nose to nose with the senior ump, the magisterial George Magerkurth, while his surrounding teammates jumped up and down and pointed repeatedly at the distant and also distraught fan, who was holding up the ball with one hand and pointing to his left at the foul pole with the other. Jurges, sensing a losing position, spat in Magerkurth's face, and the umpire responded with a brisk left hook to the chops before the two went down in a dusty tangle on the base path. The decision stood, of course. Both participants, as I recall, were subsequently fined, but Jurges also sat out a lengthy suspension. Lou Chiozza, inserted into the lineup in his place, broke his leg a few days later, and the Giants infield was never the same thereafter. The Reds, their team conscience somehow untouched by this injustice, went on to win the pennant, while the Giants sank to fifth place. Life, I had seen for the first time, is not fair.

Modern-day long home runs lack the misty aura of these decades-gone parabolas, but the ball, it seems certain,

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is flying as far as it ever did. Jose Canseco, the Athletics' gargantuan cruncher, hit a homer against the Blue Jays in the 1989 American League playoffs which landed in the fifth, and topmost, level of the vast SkyDome—an area to this day unvisited by any other baseball. Someone later estimated the landing site at eleven stories above the field. Even at that, Canseco himself, along with some other witnesses, has expressed a preference for a grand slam he struck against Frank Wills last May, in the same stadium, which caromed off the protective front glass of Windows on SkyDome, the third-level restaurant in dead center field. Kit Stier, who covers the Athletics for the Oakland *Tribune*, subsequently hiked out to interview some of the startled dinner patrons there, who told him that the ball, if undeflected, would have continued untouched into the kitchens. (Pleased by the buoyancy of indoor Toronto air, Josey later suggested that he wouldn't mind a trade or a free-agency deal someday that would permit him to bash for the Blue Jays; then he heard about the Canadian tax laws and changed his mind.) I was reminded about three or four other Canseco blasts in the course of my interviews (including a dead-center-field World Series slam I saw at Dodger Stadium, which was dimmed by the Kirk Gibson all-timer in the same game), but this was a pattern I had already come to recognize. Great home-run hitters—Mays, Mantle, Kingman, Killebrew, and the rest—have often seemed to be in competition with themselves most of all.

THE Bo Jackson story is the worst news of this baseball season, and if it does not take a happier turn in the end, the only comfort for him may be that he has already left some sizable footprints across the pastime. The severe hip injury he sustained last winter in an N.F.L. playoff game, while he was pursuing his second career, as a running back for the Los Angeles Raiders, may well terminate all his athletic activities. Jackson, the best-known sports celebrity in the land, thanks to those engaging "Bo Knows" Nike commercials, resolutely continues to promise that he will shake off the damage and come back to play baseball once again (for the White Sox, who signed him to a contingency contract after he was dropped by his original team, the Royals), but most orthopedists take a grave view of his chances. If they are right, it will be a tragedy. Bo's predilection for strikeouts and a passing uncertainty with fly balls had so far kept him from being considered a major-league player of the first rank, but when he really connected with a pitch all that was forgotten. His monument may turn out to be the second-inning home run he lofted against Oil Can Boyd in Fenway Park on July 16, 1988. The ball left the yard just to the right of the center-field flagpole and struck close to the top of a wall up there that runs well above the upper bleachers, at the same level as the screening atop the Green Monster. Conservative Red Sox observers put the point of impact sixty-two feet up and better than four hundred feet out. Lou Gorman, the Boston general manager, believes that *another* Bo-vs.-Can home run, smacked the following spring in the Royals' Florida park at Baseball City, may have flown even farther, but an absence of any surrounding architecture makes computation difficult.

Gorman told me that he also had a vivid recollection of a flyer set sail by Boog Powell, the massive old Orioles doorstop, that glanced off the back edge of the right-field roof at the old Comiskey Park, beyond the light towers, and off into the outer darkness; native runners sent in search of the pill said they'd found it three blocks away. These *National Geographic* trackdowns are entertaining but historically dubious, since local topography and the excitability of witnesses come into play. Joe Morgan, the Red Sox manager, recalled for me a wind-aided dinger hit a few seasons ago by a Pawtucket outfielder of his, Sam Bowen, that landed beyond the left-field wall (this was in Toledo)—a paced-off five hundred and seventy-three feet away. He feels confident about the distance, he said, because he dispatched two idle pitchers of his in search of the souvenir, who came back and told him that the arriving missile had startled (and just missed) the second baseman of a Little League nine at play out there. Well, maybe.

This need of ours for the longest-ever, out-of-the-election-district home run seems to arise from a curious inner uncertainty; we need constant statistical reassurance that the latest wonder, on the field or on the tube, equals or exceeds anything from the past before we can accord it a full measure of awe and delight. Many ballparks now offer the fans and the media a computer-assisted insta-stat announcing an extended, hit-the-ground distance of each home run even when it has failed to leave the park: a fraud, inasmuch as one ingredient of the trigonometry will always be a pure guess about the ball's angle of flight on departure or ricochet. This particular numbers game may have had its origin with the Twins, whose P.R. people were approached one day in 1961 by a math instructor at Stillwater State Prison, in Minnesota, with the request that he be permitted to make some measurements of their then current yard, Metropolitan Stadium. Thus armed, he soon returned with a chart of the premises which set forth the distances from home plate to every fair-ball seat in the park. "Harmon Killebrew was with us back then," Twins media director Tom Mee told me, "and everybody loved those numbers."

What I enjoy is the landmark landing sites and measurements *within* a park—a painted seat or a star-shaped decal with the slugger's initials inside—which a number of teams have dedicated, in the manner of a historical society immortalizing a local battlefield. Sitting in the stands before the game and picking out these faraway wonders is a kick. Tim McCarver, the passionate Mets and CBS game announcer, tipped me off that the star up in right field at Veterans Stadium which marks a 1971 Willie Stargell blast against Jim Bunning is not absolutely accurate. "It was a hanging slider—I should know, because I was the catcher who called the pitch," McCarver said. "And it went way out there and suddenly disappeared through an entranceway in the top deck. No noise, no carom or bouncing around—it was just *gulped*. When they came to put up one of their commemorative stars, they could only stick it by that exit. They had no idea how far the ball actually went."

Leaving over-all home-run distances unmeasured encourages legend and simultaneously preserves science, I submit. The boomed line drive that caroms off some unoccupied top-deck seat with no previous apparent droop or sag to its flight path is particularly thrilling, because it looks as if it would continue onward and upward forever; I still recall a pulled Joe DiMaggio home run like that, into the left-field upper deck at Yankee Stadium. The laws of physics, however, decree that once a missile begins to lose its propulsive force it quickly reverts to gravitational free-fall: almost a straight downward path. As a young fan, I used to observe this phenomenon prettily demonstrated in the laboratory of the Polo Grounds, which had a frighteningly proximate right-field wall, two hundred and fifty-seven feet down the line, with an overhanging upper deck just above. Again and again, you'd see a right fielder jam his back up against the wall, put up his hands, and catch a fly ball that looked like a flowerpot nudged off a fire escape above his head. Next time, he'd stare up, stick up his mitt, and, open-mouthed, catch nothing: a home run, usually by Mel Ott.

TIM MCCARVER also reminded me about Darryl Strawberry's thunderous blow against Ken Dayley at Busch Stadium in 1985. The game, on the last Tuesday of the season, was the first of a critical three that the visiting Mets had to sweep in order to stay alive in their division, and the two starters, John Tudor and the Mets' Ron Darling, had pitched a double shutout through the regular distance before being relieved. The Strawberry homer, in the top of the eleventh, bounced off the scoreboard clock, high up in right center: the sudden stroke of a mighty bell, one felt. (The Mets won the next night as well, behind Doc Gooden, but went down in the third game and were eliminated.) "Busch was never a home-run stadium," McCarver said, "but Straw could small-up any park." (Strawberry, who has departed Shea Stadium and its derisive "Darr-ylll!" catcalls to play for the Dodgers, entered this season with two hundred and fifty-two lifetime home runs; his one hundred and seventy-one over the past five years is the best among all active sluggers.)

The longest homer ever hit at Busch, Tim McCarver went on, was Willie McCovey's against Alvin Jackson in 1966, the park's first year. "There's no doubt in my mind about this," he said. "I called that pitch, too. It was as if McCovey had hit it off a tee. It caromed off the upper part of the scoreboard and bounced back onto the field. It was longer than Straw's homer, by *far*."

McCarver was a highly regarded major-league catcher for twenty-one years, mostly with the Cardinals and the Phillies, before he moved up behind the mike, and though he was not known as a slugger, I was pretty sure he had a favorite home run of his own tucked away somewhere, and I asked for it. "Tenth inning of the fifth game of the World Series in 1964," he said, like a slide lecturer punching up the

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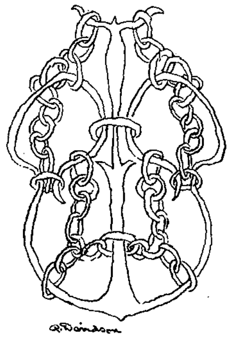
south portal at Chartres. "A three-and-two sinker by Pete Mikkelsen that didn't sink. We had two men on, up at Yankee Stadium, and it won the game. I remember the pitch, but I don't remember going around the bases. I was twenty-two years old, and very impressionable."

McCarver, I noticed, had delivered McCovey's name a little oddly, and I seemed to detect the same tone whenever that name came up in conversations. A *hush.* Lon Simmons recalled a McCovey two-run shot against Steve Blass at Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Stadium on the last day of the 1966 season. "It was a line drive over the center-field wall, and it went on *forever,*" he said. "But of course I'd seen him do the same thing with that sweeping stroke of his, years before, when he hit one against Jim Maloney in the old Cincinnati ballpark, over that moon-deck in right field. Only a couple of balls had ever been hit up there before."

Fran Healy, who had been a young teammate of McCovey's on the Giants in the early seventies, told me that Sparky Anderson, then the manager of the Cincinnati Big Red Machine, hated to pitch to Stretch under any circumstances. "There was a game against them in their park one day when we had a runner on third with no outs, so they had to play their infield in, with McCovey up at bat," Fran said. "I looked out, and they were all standing sort of sidewise, to make less of a target. Later on, one of them said they should be drawing combat pay, because of those line drives of his. McCovey was the only hitter I can remember that had whole teams in awe of him."

THIS one-course banquet is almost done, but a pause before the final servings might be in order. The treat I have in mind is a homer-free spring game at Scottsdale on my recent trip which almost didn't get played at all. Just as the lineups were announced before this Padres-Giants meeting, a considerable thunderstorm blew in, causing us seated fans to make a rush for the narrow little exit tunnels, where we ran smack into our arriving counterparts in a welter of wet hair, soaking T-shirts, rain-darkened caps, half-closed umbrellas, and teetering full cardboard trays of beer and hot dogs. It rained hard for a while, with the little plastic pennants on top of the stands making snapping noises over our heads, and in time my wife and I made a run for it to the parking lot, jumping over the sudden brown puddles and holding towels over our heads, and back to our car. Waiting it out, we turned on the blower in the Avis, got out books, and finished off a box of Cracker Jack together, while some desert Chopin came over the radio, with an occasional accompanying spatter of hailstones on the roof. The racy black Nissan just next to us had an Oregon plate that read "S PAW"—Trevor Wilson's wheels, I figured out. The rain stopped in time, almost as quickly as it had begun, and when we got back in the park (and tipped the rainwater out of our metal box-seat chairs) the grounds crew had already demudded the infield, and the fans—the *real* fans: half the sellout crowd had gone home—got a game after all, and felt smug and lucky.



Spring training is overpopulated and less genial than it used to be—a victim of its own charm—and more changes are on the way. The Cleveland Indians are giving up on their old Tucson camp, after forty-five years, and moving to a larger, expensive new facility up the Gulf Coast from St. Petersburg, and the eight-team Cactus League is looking about anxiously for a replacement. Homey little Scottsdale Stadium, where front-row patrons sit about five strides away from the third-base line, will be gone by next March, replaced by a much larger concrete job; home plate, somebody told me, will be out where second base used to be. This game felt special, then, and it did not disappoint. Various hurlers—Eric Gunderson and Mike Remlinger for the Giants; the very tall Andy Benes and Larry Andersen for the Padres—threw all zeros for a time, encouraging us in the stands to watch the weather (glowering clouds and heavy sheets of purplish rain kept sweeping down from the west and then on by, leaving us untouched) and to relish the idle byplay of March baseball. Dann Bilardello, coming up to hit in the sixth, heard himself announced as "Billardio" on the loudspeaker; clutching his ears, he turned and mouthed the proper syllables to the park announcer, up in the press box, who tried again and got it right. A few minutes later, the infield sprinklers turned themselves on unexpectedly, soaking the already soaked infield and driving Robby Thompson to cover, and everybody cracked up. A little later, I heard two men sitting near me wondering out loud why it was that left-handed batters, as a group, always look so much better swinging at a pitch than their righty counterparts: good question.

It got colder, and after the Padres batted around in the seventh, doing frightful things to a new Giants pitcher named Rodriguez, my wife went back to the car to warm up. I waited a little longer, amid gathering shadows and dwindling neighbors, and when we stood for the stretch and the old song—my last one in this boardfront park—I was reminded of Bart Giamatti's reminder, that baseball is meant to break your heart.

Kevin Mitchell came up to bat, starting the Giants' half, and a young boy sitting directly behind me yelled, "C'mon, Kevin, tie it up!"

His mother (I think it was his mother) laughed and said, "'*Tie it up*'? Oh, you kill me," and the kid said, "Well, you know what I mean."

Mitchell walked and then stole second, and while he knocked the mud off his uniform (a tight fit, if the truth be told) the mother said, "It's round and it's big and it's fast—what is it?" and the boy said, "It's a *Kevin Mitchell!*" A minute later, Kevin came around and scored on a ground out, and we yelled and clapped, even though that only made it 6–1, Padres. Time for me to go home. I imagine the boy made his mother stay on right to the end, which means that they were still there, in the cold and damp, when Terry Kennedy capped an amazing Giants six-run rally in the bottom of the ninth (I read about this in the paper the next day) with a game-winning pinch-hit two-run double. A souvenir game: a keeper.

THE Red Sox, too, will be packing their bags and moving on next spring—nobody knows where. The Boston front office and the city fathers of Winter Haven have had a falling-out, and it looks as if the Pirates instead of the Bosox will be working out and playing their spring exhibitions there next March, hard by the shores of Lake Lulu. This meant another last game for me (I've sat through a hundred of them, it seems, since the Polo Grounds went away), just a week after the Padres-Giants beauty—the Sox against the Tigers this time, on the final day of my trip. Worn out by overtones, I tried to watch these few innings without emotion, but then somebody in the little three-row press box at Chain O'Lakes Park pointed out that this would very likely prove to be the last Polk County Championship game in history. This is a long-standing spring joke—a no-trophy award bestowed annually on the winner of the handful of March games between the two teams, who are separated by twenty miles of orange groves and convenience stores. Now a Sox P.R. man rummaged around in his stats satchel and suddenly found that the all-time won-lost P.C.C. records—going back to 1966, when the Bosox moved in from Scottsdale—stood at this instant at:

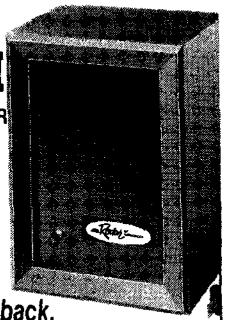
Tigers	60
Red Sox	59
Ties	1

The riveting news ("This is like the last Harvard-Yale game!" Peter Gammons cried) was given to us in the bottom of the third inning, when the Red Sox, behind Tom Bolton, were trailing the visitors and Frank Tanana, 2–0. No cheering in the press box is an absolute rule, of course, except when it isn't. "Go, Sox!" I heard from quite close (I myself had yelled it, it turned out), and, as if by magic, the boys responded, batting around in the fourth and enjoying a wild pitch, an error, and a terrible-hop single in the course of their five-run championship-tying outburst. I had a plane to catch in Tampa, and so shortly arose, gratified, and departed the stands, walking out in right-field foul ground toward the clubhouse. Something was missing, though, and it wasn't until I was out by the warmup mounds that I heard the noise and knew what it was: a home run—*ka-chow!*—by the brand-new Boston cleanup hitter, Jack Clark.

GEORGE BRETT has the last at-bat. Brett, who won his third batting title last year, in his eighteenth season with the Royals, hasn't been particularly thought of as a hitter of home runs, but he has the knack of it, we might say. He was an early and devout pupil of the late Charlie Lau, the inventor of the waiting, flat-bat, head-down, back-to-front, high-average style of hitting that still bears his name. Brett told me once that when he first went to Lau (a coach who never tinkered with a player's swing unless specifically invited to do so) he was offered the choice of becoming a .320 hitter, with about ten home runs per year, or a .280 hitter, with twenty homers or better: Lau would fill either order. Brett chose to swing, not slug, and got good at it (he batted .390 one year), but some homers came along, in pleasing fashion, just the same—two hundred and eighty-one of them, to date. He has been one of the great occasion hitters of our time.

Tracy Ringolsby, the Dallas scribe, placed Brett's performance in the third game of the 1985 American League playoff, against the Toronto Blue Jays, high among his all-time favorites. Brett hit two homers that day, as he went four for four at the plate, with a double off the wall, and eleven total bases. "Toronto had won the first two games," Ringolsby reminded me. "But it was like Brett willed that they weren't going to go on that way. All the Blue Jays had to do was walk him one time and they win the game and probably get into the World Series. Then George hits *another*, in the sixth game, and the Royals come back and win it, and go on and take that World Series, against the Cardinals, as well."

Of all these homeric tales, George Brett's has some sweep and distance to it—an opera, as against an aria. Back in 1976, Brett came up to bat in the eighth inning of the fifth, and deciding, American League playoff game, and hit a tying three-run home run into the right-field stands at Yankee Stadium—it was the very first pitch he had clearly tried to pull all day. Not enough, it turned out, since the Yankees won the pennant minutes later, on Chris Chambliss's dramatic solo shot off Mark Littell in the ninth. The two clubs resumed the following October, with the Yankees again rallying in deadly fashion in the last inning of the fifth, and deciding, playoff game. The closeness of the games and the quality of the two clubs had made these October wars almost too painful to watch by this time—a battleground memorably symbolized for the televi-



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sion audience by a postgame glimpse of Freddie Patek, the Royals shortstop, sitting alone on the bench after the last game, with a bloodied knee, and his uniform almost in tatters, and tears running down his face.

Brett did not figure prominently in the scoring in that second championship, but the following year, with the same two clubs again having at each other in the same, near-ritual fashion, he was back at work, hitting three home runs in the third game, at the Stadium; once again, the effort came to naught, when Thurman Munson drove an enormous poke into the left-field monuments, in the eighth, which won the game. The next day, the Yanks had their pennant, as usual.

The Yankees and Royals took October off in 1979, when neither won their division, but one more act in the drama remained. Two of my interviewees—Jim Frey, the Cubs executive V.P., and Peter Gammons, the *Globe* columnist and ESPN learned professor—unhesitatingly selected Brett's at-bat against Goose Gossage and the Yankees in the third game of the 1980 playoffs as their answer to my perennial question. Frey, who managed the Royals that year, reminded me that his club had won the first two games, out at Kansas City, but said that he and his players were still all too aware of the Yankees' ugly habit of coming back, late in a game or a series, and finding some way to win it. The Yanks led here, 2–1, in the seventh inning, in fact, when Goose Gossage, then at his apex, faced Brett, with K.C. base runners on first and third.

"If you'd managed against the Yankees, you were trying never to have to deal with Gossage, because he was so dominant," Frey said. "But here he is, walking in, and George is out there, waiting. A dramatic situation. And George hit it in the upper deck."

"The ball landed in the sixth row of the top deck, but all you heard was this absolute silence," Peter Gammons said. "It put a hush on that whole ballpark. What that ball said was '*Bam, that's it—Yankees over. The Royals have finally arrived.*' "

I was there, too, and that silence still rings in my ears. The game had a couple more innings to go, during which the Yankees loaded the bases at one juncture, before Rick Cerone lined into a double play, but when I walked down the ramps after the game to the clubhouse (I'd been sitting in the stands with my family) the customarily raucous and unforgiving Yankee hordes all around me made no complaint, for once. They sensed the moment and the fitness of it: Brett had made it come right at last.

Gammons told me that he'd stayed late in the clubhouse, talking to Gossage, and finally asked him whether he, too hadn't seen a purity to the moment—power versus power, and a clean, defining result. A great home run, then, that everyone could admire—even the man who'd thrown it. "Gossage said, 'Yes, exactly!' " Gammons went on. "He said, 'I'm a winner who got beat by a greater winner this time. That's just the way I feel.' And then he thanked me for asking the question."

The moment has stayed with George Brett as well. I called him at home a week or two ago (he was recuperating from a torn knee ligament, which will keep him out of action for a month or more), and he said, "I can still see the pitch—I get goose bumps. The one thing that sticks out was that silence—fifty-six thousand people all gone quiet at the same time. That wasn't what you'd call an extended confrontation between me and Goose, where the count goes full and you foul off pitches. I felt, Well, let's get this over with, and the first pitch went out. It wasn't what you'd call a cheap shot. We got word later that the pitch had been ninety-eight miles an hour—a Gossage special."

I asked Brett if while he circled the bases he'd felt a sense of retribution for his previous terrible disappointments.

"Not then—not yet, because they still had a chance to come back," he said. "But after the double play, when Reggie was doubled off second base, I had the feeling, *They're done.* It was the end of something, I guess. They won again the next year, but that was the season of the strike, so it didn't mean as much. They never seemed invincible again after that home run. Now I go up to the Stadium and look around at their team, and I think, Where is everybody? No Reggie, no Goose, no Chambliss, no Piniella, no Catfish—no nobody. But then I look at our team, and it's the same thing. I'm the only one left."

—Roger Angell

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

MAY 16

AT long last, Washington has returned to normal. "Normal" means lurching from topic to topic and becoming obsessed with each one, and assessing everything in terms of its political implications. Although political implications are never far from our minds, and were present during the Gulf War, there actually were aspects of the war that did seem more important. If our involvement in the Gulf region isn't quite over—and no one knows when it will be—the Gulf has largely slipped from consciousness (and conversations). It's as if this town has had a collective case of spring fever: Washington is at its most beautiful, and the grim subject of the war is behind us. Other things occurred during that period, but they were essentially suppressed by our inability to think about more than one and a half things (at most) at the same time. The recent topics have been at the most delicious end of the gossip-and-speculation spectrum: in particular, whether the President will dump his Vice-President (this had been a low-grade topic for some time) and whether he might rid himself of his highly unpopular chief of staff. This wasn't a new topic, either, but it had died away for lack of new material, until someone spilled the goods—there's quite a bit of speculation as to who did—on John Sununu's latest display of extravagant self-importance.

The sudden news, a week ago last Saturday, that the President had been hospitalized with a heart ailment hit Washington like a thunderclap. Though the problem was a minor, easily managed one, it immediately summoned forth the spectre of Dan Quayle's succeeding him. At one level, in our subconscious, we had always known that something could happen to the President, but we had counted on its not happening. The unusually fit Bush looks closer to forty-five than to sixty-six, and his strangely frenetic pace threw us off the question of his mortality. However unfair the caricature of Quayle that has developed—and a great many people think it unfair—the possibility of his becoming President gives even many of his defenders real pause. Even many of his defenders think the damage to him has been fatal—and not just inflicted by a hostile press and late-night television jokesters.

Quayle is a more alert and intelligent man than the caricature has it. He is also an utterly pleasant man with a nice sense of humor who has weathered the battering with considerable grace: there are no signs of the anger and bitterness that less balanced political figures would have long since acquired. He's knowledgeable about certain subjects and about the political dynamics of Washington. But he's no great mind: Quayle's seems the average mind that has been exposed to certain issues and can deal with them passably. The eagerness he displays has its attractive side, but it suggests at times that we may not be dealing with a grownup, and there is still a whiff of impulsiveness. Quayle has acquired a smart staff and worked doggedly at his job, and his obvious efforts to overcome his image are almost moving—but probably futile. Some of his friends think his confidence was so shaken by his experience in 1988 that he can't get it back. He of course occasionally says silly things, and on television, though he has improved considerably over the past couple of years, his struggle to handle the situation adequately is apparent. He seems still frightened, and trying ever so hard not to screw up. There is a tendency on the part of some of Quayle's defenders to divorce his television persona from the rest of him; but we know by now that though some politicians are more adept at television than others (and Quayle is a media-age politician), television does reveal truths. A Republican analyst says, "His persona in the TV age is a devastating one. The test of the Presidency starts with whether you have some sort of wisdom and whether you are up to the job—what Quayle projects isn't. It isn't the jokes, it's the *look* on TV."

Republicans are for the most part chary of talking openly about Quayle in other than flattering terms. Republicans are particularly good at "talking points": lines that are to be delivered by Administration and Party officials and dependably sympathetic members of the press who appear on talk shows. The talking points are easily recognizable: when the seventh person says the identical thing, you get the picture. But some Republicans, after going through the obligatory "He's better than he seems," and citing the projects (mostly minor ones) he has undertaken, suggest that Quayle faces an insurmountable hurdle in gaining public confidence. A friend of Bush's says, "It's very difficult to overcome those early impressions." Some Republicans quietly subscribe to the theory that, as one leading member of Congress said to me recently, "I felt that George didn't want anyone on the ticket who would upstage him." This man continued, "If there'd been a vote in the Convention, I'm sure it would have been somebody different." I can recall the appalled sotto-voce reactions on the

"You will be going on a long walk."

part of some of his fellow-senators at the Republican Convention in New Orleans shortly after it became known that Bush had selected Quayle. And some of the reactions weren't so sotto. They knew their man and thought he was likable enough, but no one to place next in line to the President. Many of them still feel the same way. It may also be remembered that none of Bush's top advisers thought he would select Quayle—and that James Baker actively opposed Quayle's being named. Some Republicans assert that Quayle would do a perfectly adequate job if he suddenly had to assume office—but when they are asked if they would like to see him become President there is a long pause.

Despite the denials of some Republicans, there was substantial behind-the-scenes talk about Quayle in the Capitol cloakrooms last week; one Republican member of Congress, when I asked him whether there had been *any*, laughed and said, "That is the subject of the week: Congress is no different than a coffee shop." Most conversations—over the past two years—about whether Bush would dump Quayle begin and end with the point that for him to do so would be the kind of admission of error that Bush couldn't stomach. A Republican operative says, "Quayle was his decision. He would have to admit that he'd made a monumental mistake, and he won't do that." This person added, "There are some things he's intractable on." An additional point—made often recently—is that the Vice-Presidential candidate doesn't much affect the voters' decision. Perhaps not, but in a very close election—should there be one—every little thing counts. And Republican operatives are a bit more nervous about this than they usually let on. "We don't need this issue," one said to me last week, adding, "but it's not fatal." This person said, "He's done perfectly well at his job," and, when it was suggested that that isn't the issue, said, "I agree that's not the issue, but we have to keep that the issue, so that we don't get into the succession issue."

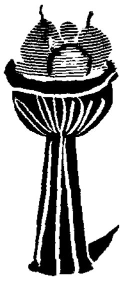
There are people close to Bush who have thought for some time that, though he gives every sign of being "dug in" on the subject of Quayle, he is capable of making the cold-blooded move if necessary. A member of Congress who is close to Bush said, after going through the ritual defense of Quayle, "I would be confident that George Bush would be totally loyal to Dan Quayle until the end, but at the end there would be a serious reappraisal. I've never thought Quayle would be renominated." There are even some around Quayle who don't completely rule out his being replaced. It would all be very messy, of course (unless Quayle quietly agreed to step aside, perhaps taking another high-level position), and the various political calculations as to whether Quayle should be on the ticket again are more complicated than most people imagine. Quayle and his staff have worked hard to cultivate the Republican right (as well as the Israeli lobby). He and his staff have worked the Republican Party circuit hard: Quayle shows up at the Party dinners and the fund-raisers; state chairmen have been stroked. Much of the right considers him its man, and wouldn't take kindly to his being off-loaded. At the same time, potential rivals of Quayle in 1996 tend to prefer that he remain on the ticket so that some other rival doesn't get a leg up. And some right-wingers who say they would be much offended by Quayle's being displaced in 1992 are looking for someone else to back in 1996, because they think Quayle is unelectable. "He can't recover," one of these people said to me last week. Bush is now said to be more entrenched than before on the subject of Quayle, because of what he felt to be an unfair "piling on" by the press when the question of Quayle's possible succession arose anew. But that's an odd criterion for choosing the potential next President, and, anyway, probably only Bush knows his own mind.

BY the time John Sununu got caught in his egregious use of government planes, he had aggregated a long and powerful list of enemies. Many of us knew at least one person who had gone to Bush to try to convince him that Sununu was doing him more harm than good. In his high-handed, arrogant way, he had offended many members of Congress (including important Republicans), Cabinet officers, other friends of Bush's. He browbeat members of the White House staff and is believed to have driven some out. He takes a dim view of aides talking to the despised press, though he does it on occasion; Sununu dislikes the press heartily, and the feeling is largely reciprocated. The press may be a pain, but it is part of the scene, and if it is handled deftly it can be quite sympathetic (see James Baker). However annoying Congress may be at times, it, too, is part of the scene, and there's little point in White House officials' treating it with contempt: members of Congress do find ways of getting even.

Sununu is in love with his own high I.Q., and apparently thinks that is the same thing as wisdom. He inserts himself into all manner of policy matters, overriding Cabinet officers on both substance and access to the President. Sununu has superimposed his own views on environmental and energy policy—he's not much in favor of either one. He handled the White House's strategy on the budget fight last year abysmally, making the President look foolish. A Republican strategist says, "He thinks he knows something about everything. He overrates his political acumen: his politics has four corners on it—the corners of New Hampshire. It permeates how he thinks about national politics, about relationships with the Hill, about fund-raising. New Hampshire is an aberration, and he doesn't listen." Among the officials who are known to be none too fond of Sununu is Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, who is very close to the President. Brady is, if anything, even more of an aristocrat than Bush, and, in his unassuming way, he can say things to Bush that others can't. A Republican strategist says, "More than anyone else, Brady has only Bush's interests at heart." He is one who is known to have spoken to Bush about Sununu. Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher is also understood to have complained to Bush about Sununu. James Baker is not overly fond of Sununu (and vice versa), but because Baker is known to have wanted at the outset to play a broad policymaking role in the Bush Administration, only to be edged out by Sununu (apparently with the President's complicity), he must, according to his friends, be careful about how much he says to Bush on the subject.

After the budget fight, there were

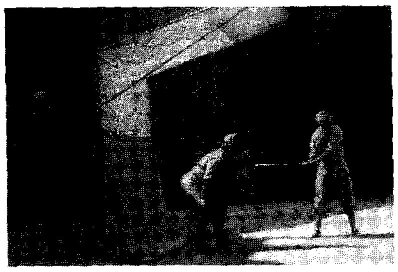
rumors around town of a pending shakeup in the White House staff—some of the rumors spread by people who know Bush very well. The thought was that someone should be brought in to give the President wiser political advice—either replacing Sununu or sharing power with him. But Sununu is notoriously loath to share power. Then, shortly before Christmas, Sununu played a prominent role in two more tangles. One was the choice of William Bennett to be the new chairman of the Republican National Committee: Bennett is a swaggerer and a bit of a bully—he made it clear right away that Republicans would continue to play the race card—and even many of his friends thought his temperament was wrong for the job. In fairly short order, Bennett said he didn't want the job after all, and, though other reasons were given, most people believed that the real reason was that both Sununu and Bennett (who thought he would be granted more access to the President) concluded that the place wasn't big enough for the both of them. This episode, too, made Bush look silly and the Party look incompetent.



The other embarrassment was over the suddenly promulgated policy that colleges receiving federal aid couldn't set aside scholarships for minorities. Though the Bush Administration, in the course of last year's argument over the civil-rights bill, had had considerable success in aligning itself against "quotas," the scholarship ruling was widely deemed to have gone too far. White House officials claimed that the whole thing had been promulgated without their knowledge by a mid-level official in the Department of Education, but, even if that was true, that still raised the question of where was the chief of staff, and the new ruling was consonant with the Administration's politically advantageous campaign against "quotas," and Sununu was defending it. Once again, the President was embarrassed. The university community was up in arms; it was known that Mr. and Mrs. Bush had been supporters of the United Negro College Fund. It's one thing to take on Willie Horton and another to take on black college students. The White House issued an incoherent ruling redefining (but not completely walking away from) the old one, and then the new Education Secretary, Lamar Alexander, quietly buried the old ruling. So, during the Christmas season, Sununu was once again deemed to be in big trouble. At a Christmas party, a Republican operative said to me, "Things are completely out of control." Shortly thereafter came the beginning of the war in the Gulf, and Sununu's follies were promptly forgotten.

When the furor arose in late April over Sununu's use of government planes to attend political functions and the Indy 500 and to go on ski trips and to a dentist in Boston, the striking thing was that just about no one came to his defense—not prominent Republicans, not members of Congress, not Cabinet members, not even members of the White House staff (with the exception of Sununu's closest aide). Privately, White House aides questioned whether Sununu could ever adequately answer all the questions raised by this episode—in particular, how Sununu, who is financially strapped, could reimburse the government for the coach-plus-one-dollar fare that he was supposed to pay for his and his family's personal travel on Air Force planes. Sununu tried to stonewall the issue, in the mistaken judgment that that would make it go away; the result, of course, was quite the opposite, and prolonged the President's embarrassment. Even the President displayed some displeasure publicly. He had been embarrassed by his own chief of staff on a matter of some importance to him—ethics. He was said to be unamused by Sununu's clumsy efforts to make a joke of the whole thing, and instructed his speechwriters not to insert any jokes about the matter in his own speech to the White House Correspondents' Association dinner in late April.

Sununu had made the classic Washington mistake. In assuming he didn't need anyone (except the President), in treating one and all arrogantly, he in effect guaranteed that no one would be there for him when he got in trouble. He had virtually no line of credit to draw upon. His highly excessive flying around at government expense was all the more damaging because it was emblematic of his general bumptiousness. It's often said that Sununu was simply playing his designated role as Bush's "bad cop," but it's not clear why



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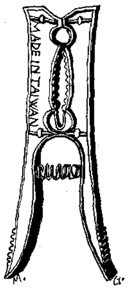
such a role is so necessary. Presidential aides can be tough characters, and even throat-slitters, without storming around and insulting people—in fact, it can be argued that subtler is more effective. James Baker, as Ronald Reagan's chief of staff (and in later roles), was nobody's pushover, and probably slit a throat or two, but he established a long line of credit, which he draws upon to this day. A close friend of Bush's recently said of Sununu, "If you're arrogant enough to think you don't need friends in this town, you don't survive very long. There are too many dependencies in this town. Bush is dependent on members of Congress and he's dependent on people who head the departments. If Sununu is offending people, that's serious in terms of the issue of governance." Bush is commonly said to be indebted to Sununu for rescuing his candidacy for the Republican nomination in New Hampshire (where Sununu was governor), but by any rational standard such gratitude can only go so far. This friend of Bush's said that there are limits to Bush's tolerance. He said, "He's more cold-blooded than many people realize. He measures the assets and the liabilities, and he doesn't have any problem with decisiveness." Another friend of Bush's said recently, "If you say you have a constituency of one—the President—that's wrong. You're not doing justice to the President. If you can't deal with the Hill, it doesn't help the President; if you can't deal with the press, it doesn't help the President." This friend added that, though Bush is a very loyal man, "if necessary, Bush would make a move and he wouldn't look back." This friend also said that Bush doesn't particularly like to hear that without Sununu he wouldn't have become President; others, Bush included, were involved in the exercise.



Though it was clear that Bush was unhappy with his chief of staff over the episode of the government planes, few people thought that the matter would in itself lead to Sununu's dismissal. But it did seem that Sununu was now on very thin ice and didn't have many mistakes left to make and still keep his job. On Thursday, May 2nd, a friend of Bush's told me that Bush was "disenchanted" with Sununu. Two days later, Bush was hospitalized with atrial fibrillation, and the subject changed. Sununu was seen busily going back and forth to the hospital (reminiscent of Donald Regan). Though the President was expected to recover quickly, his friends weren't eager to harass him on the subject of his chief of staff. A Republican operative said to me a few days later, "John Sununu is the luckiest man in Washington." Still, last week's change in the regulations governing the use of government planes by the chief of staff was an obvious slap by Bush. It turns out that the alleged basis for the old policy—that the President must be able to be in immediate phone contact with his chief of staff (even on ski slopes?)—wasn't so important after all. Now Sununu will have to get permission—from another White House aide, no less—to use government planes on various occasions. Many people here think that this public humiliation by the President will make Sununu less powerful and effective, both within the White House and beyond. There are still some questions about the reimbursements. Though the subject of Sununu has essentially been overtaken for now, if character is destiny we will be hearing about Sununu again.

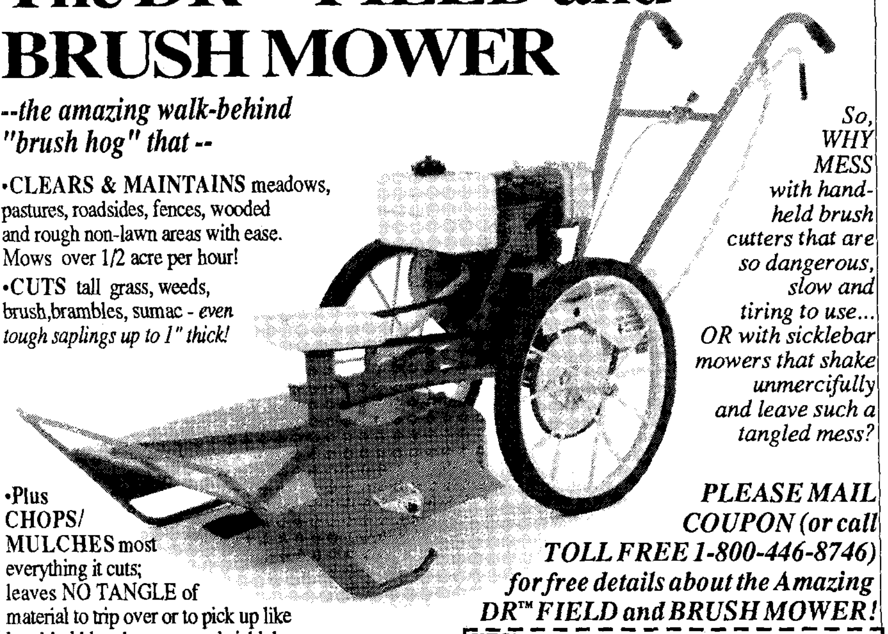
THE President's illness, though brief and apparently mild, caused a subtle psychological shift here. Suddenly, things that had been taken as certainties no longer were. Bush may be the odds-on candidate for reëlection, but now more people think, Well, just maybe . . . On the Saturday night that Bush was hospitalized, a friend even suggested at dinner that perhaps Bush wouldn't run again: that, though his illness wasn't serious, he would have had a good four years of foreign-policy achievements, and we all know he isn't much interested in domestic policy; he clearly enjoys his family and could have a lovely time with his grandchildren; second terms are when scandals erupt; Mrs. Bush might say, "George, enough." Whether or not there was anything to this, by the time Congress reconvened the following Monday there was a new feeling in the air—especially but not solely among Democrats. Bush's illness had brought home the fact that events can change in ways we can't foresee. The economy was still far from in good shape. Not only was the glow of the Persian Gulf War fading but Bob Woodward's new book, "The Commanders," demonstrated fairly convincingly that Colin Powell had favored staying with sanctions longer—thus providing Democrats some protection against criticism for having voted the same way. (But, according to Woodward's account, Powell didn't put up much of a fight, and didn't state his own position directly to the President.) House Democrats have authorized a preliminary staff inquiry into whether the Reagan team in 1980 did in fact make a behind-the-scenes deal with Iran to not release the hostages until Reagan took office—in exchange for some weapons. This story has been gone over many times, but now new evidence, albeit inconclusive, has been offered by Gary Sick, a member of Jimmy Carter's National Security Council staff and a professor at Columbia. Sick recently went public with the new evidence he had gathered—hoping that others could help him complete the circle. A lot of people, and not just partisans or conspiracists, think that something like what has been suggested did take place—but the story relies in part on some shady characters and circumstantial evidence, and the alleged key figure, William Casey, is dead. Some things have been noticeable in Bush's reactions to questions about the matter: he becomes very agitated, his denial is very limited and specific—that he wasn't in Paris in 1980, where the deal was allegedly sealed—and he adds such enticing throwaway lines as "All I can speak for is my own participation or lack thereof." He doesn't deny that something may have happened. One school of thought here has it that a new attempt is being made to bury the story with Casey.

Democrats are of mixed views about the wisdom and value of recommending some sort of fuller investigation of the story—not necessarily by members of Congress. The enthusiasts, who are mainly in the House, feel that it must be looked into and that it is so explosive that it could remove the argument that only Republicans are patriots. A House Democratic aide says, "This would undo seventy per cent of the damage Republicans have done to the Democratic Party in the last ten years." Any investigation has its risks, of course. The Iran-Contra hearings have gone down in mythology as a failure—even though they drew out a wealth of important information. We Americans persist in the idea that we ought to be able to get at The Truth—thus our obsession with "smoking guns"—even in the face of many important truths. The 1980 hostage story does depend in part on the testimony of some shady characters—but some shady characters were fairly enlightening during the Iran-Contra hearings. There is in fact a school of thought here that there may have been a continuum between the alleged hostage affair in 1980 and the Iran-Contra affair. We may never find out (and some Democrats are chary once again about bringing up Israel's role as a weapons transferrer), but, for history's sake, it may well be worth trying.

Some Democrats are now becoming more tempted to run for the Presidential nomination, and perhaps even they don't know what role the events of last week played in their calculations. Senator Jay Rockefeller, of West Virginia, indicated last week that he might be interested after all, and very quickly some Democrats here (who had looked with favor on Albert Gore the week before) decided that Rockefeller might be quite a desirable candidate. Robert Shrum, an astute Democratic consultant, has believed all along that one of the "majors"—Mario Cuomo, Lloyd Bentsen, Dick Gephardt—would run, along with some others. Shrum argues, "The nomination is always worth having, no matter what the circumstances." He points out that in 1956, when it appeared, correctly, that Eisenhower was a shoo-in for reëlection, such figures as Adlai Stevenson, Averell Harriman, and Estes Kefauver sought the Democratic nomination. He also points out that it is to the advantage of the major figures to wait—they are already fairly well known and can raise money relatively quickly. Shrum believes that the biggest factor potentially favoring the Democrats is the economy—and he also knows that the Democrats have serious political problems.

Whatever happens, the recent reminders of a mortal President, a weak economy, a humiliated chief of staff, the ever-dimming glow of the Gulf War have left this city in a changed mood from what it was only two weeks ago. But that, too, can change.

—Elizabeth Drew



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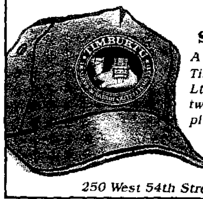
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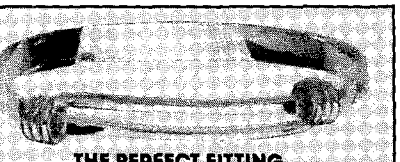
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DANCING

Waking Up "The Sleeping Beauty"

IN the ballet business, "The Sleeping Beauty" is a white elephant. You have to spend money on it, and you have to be able to dance it, and few companies can do both, although many try. Last year, in the ballet's centenary, there were several ambitious productions. The most prominent, by the San Francisco Ballet, had its merits, chief among them a brilliant début in the title role, but the production itself was undermined by the notion that the ballet would be much better off set in Russia than in France. It is always a mistake to let the designer rule the ballet and substitute visual for musical interest; if Tchaikovsky is not in charge of the show, it all goes wrong. The designer in this case, Jens-Jacob Worsaae, substituted a whole new conception for the image of civilization that Tchaikovsky had in mind. There are no Kremlinesque equivalents of the music and manners of the French baroque era; at least, the choreographer, Helgi Tomasson, was unable to find any.

It would be too much to expect Tchaikovsky to be in charge of the production, new this spring, by New York City Ballet; as soon as you walk into the theatre, the covered orchestra pit tells you that this is going to be a visual more than a musical experience. But the first thing we see when the ballet begins is a leafy allée leading us, in a series of dissolves, up to the door of the royal palace: it is Versailles or Blois or Chambord or Villandry; it is the seventeenth century; it is "The Sleeping Beauty." Most of the projections that dominate David Mitchell's visual design (and have to be protected from the lights in the pit) work well enough in the cause of the music, and most of the stage action, choreographed by Peter Martins, works even better, so that Tchaikovsky's storytelling power becomes known and is in force throughout the evening.

This seemingly modest achievement is actually revisionist in its deviation from the prevailing conception, in our dance-minded era, of "The Sleeping Beauty" as a series of set pieces for dancers: fairy variations, Rose Adagio, Vision scene, Bluebirds, grand pas de deux. It is rare enough when these dances are done well, with the unity of style that bespeaks mature classical schooling. But with the music reduced to a mere atmosphere from which dances are extruded, the ballet loses its hold on the imagination. Designers impose their "statements"; choreographers doodle in the margins left by Petipa. Some choreographers, thinking to modernize the ballet's design, set still more dancing where Tchaikovsky calls specifically for mime.

And it costs the earth. New York City Ballet is said to have had a budget of two million eight hundred thousand. No one knows how much the original St. Petersburg production cost; without the czar's privy purse, it would not have been dreamed of. Today, all that accrues to the producers of "The Sleeping Beauty" is the hollow prestige of being able to mount a production. The public gains nothing by going to see it, and may even lose its taste for the ballet. Of all the Tchaikovsky classics, "The Sleeping Beauty," which forty years ago stood highest in the public's—and the critics'—affections, is today the least loved. It makes a good gala evening for rich patrons, but once the funds have been spent, and the parties and the benefits are over, there remains a long, pompous, dramatically static, and inevitably underdecorated ballet to have to sit through. There also remains a public to attract—all those people whose kids are not on the stage in the garland dance—and this public can't be counted on to applaud and to reminisce about the ballet's heyday in the fifties and sixties, when Britain's Royal Ballet and Russia's Kirov presented it as their signature piece. If a golden legend still lingers, it's in the form of dingy videotapes and hearsay—all easily discounted after a live performance in which nothing has happened.

New York City Ballet is the foremost classical company in the world, and it sailed through its début in "The Sleeping Beauty" as if it had been dancing the ballet all its life. Naturally, there were some jitters: on opening night, Gordon Boelzner's downbeat nailed every effect in place almost before it had had time to happen. The centuries unreeled before one's eyes, the spell was cast, the spell was broken, the fairies were on amphetamines. By the second week (there were fifteen performances in all), the ballet had relaxed and begun to breathe, and to reveal its secret, which was that the company's dancing, with all its predictable strengths, was not really the main attraction.

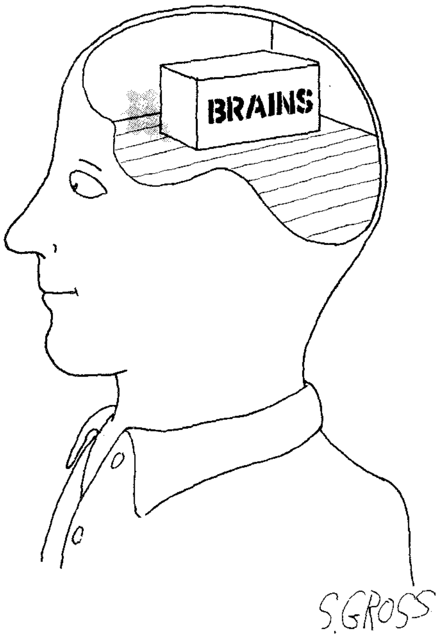
Martins and Mitchell have taken a hardheaded, problem-solving approach to reviving a masterpiece from the coma to which the academic mind-set and the follies of scenic designers had condemned it. Because ballet has no reliably recordable history, it has to prove itself anew to each generation of theatregoers, and "The Sleeping Beauty" has problems the other classics don't have: not only must it evoke an image of luxury which is also an image of beauty, and not only must it live up to the music that is and always will be its most precious asset; it must also tell a story that every single person in the audience, young or old, knows in advance—the story of the princess who pricks her finger on a spindle and sleeps a hundred years to be awakened with a kiss. "Swan Lake" and "The Nutcracker" and "Coppélia" and all the other family-audience favorites have stories you learn in the theatre; only "The Sleeping Beauty" tells you a story you know. And the story of "The Sleeping Beauty," not the ballet of "The Sleeping Beauty," is what attracts the kind of business that alone justifies the effort of maintaining a serious and costly production in repertory. The cardinal virtue of the New York City Ballet production is that it tells the story and tells it well.

Too much publicity has been given to Martins' editing of the ballet down to two acts, as if this could only result in a stripped-down, speedy "N.Y.C.B." version, in defiance of tradition. Martins has cut music that does not pertain directly to the story and stepped up the pace of the narration, but the only tradition he defies is the tradition of dull and unmusical mise en scène. It may be surprising how much music does pertain to the story; the only serious loss, for lovers of the ballet, is the suite of court dances in the hunt scene and all that goes with it—the blindman's buff, the farandole. The rest of the cuts have been taken in intermissions. Christening, birthday, hunt, and vision are combined in one act, and time in between—sixteen years, then a century—is shown passing, by means of overlapping projections. Above the turrets of the castle, the wheel of the zodiac turns toward Aurora's fatal birthday. When the Lilac Fairy puts the castle to sleep, we see the same allée we saw at the beginning, growing over with brambles and sinking from view. A moment's silence, and then another castle appears in the distance, among hills surrounded by lakes. Act I ends with Prince Désiré leaving for the sleeping castle in the Lilac Fairy's boat. The single intermission is followed by the panorama, staged uncut against changing views of a winding river (which allows the boat to cross the stage in both directions). Next comes enough of Tchaikovsky's symphonic entr'acte to get the prince ashore and up to the bedroom, slashing at vines as he goes. Then, as in the two historic Western productions, by Diaghilev in 1921 and the Royal Ballet in 1946, the Awakening gives way to the Wedding in an onstage transition.

These feats of elision aren't accomplished without a struggle. Because the music is intensely visual, the worst moments in the production are those that try to enlist Tchaikovsky's coöperation in scenic effects that he did not anticipate. (Only the zodiac really works, using for "cover" the final portion of the knitting-women scene, which Martins does not stage.) But nothing goes wrong that cannot be put right with further study. The great achievement is the avoidance of anticlimax in the Wedding scene. When the kiss has been bestowed and the castle restored, the arc of the evening is still rising. The audience that watches the Wedding suite of dances is an alert, unbored audience. We take in a lot at one sitting (the first act runs seventy-five minutes, the second just under an hour), but we are always moving forward, going somewhere. The old story retells itself in terms that gratify and nourish the appetite for fantasy which it has awakened in us.

An old story well told is a new story, and in that sense this "Sleeping Beauty" is new; it is not High Concept, it is not Postmodern. It is not even particularly original. Barring those pace-setting elisions and certain other adjustments that are the prerogative of a good ballet master (for example, the filling out of the steps in the traditional Prologue variations, and the creation of new Wedding dances to go with the old ones), Martins has contributed very little of his own. He has contented himself with the standard Petipa-based choreography, freely mixing the best elements of Royal and Kirov productions, modifying, tidying, enhancing, never intruding unless needed, a true metteur en scène. In only one instance has he made a questionable choice—Kirov Bluebirds. I would have picked Royal. I would also have preferred a man in the part of Carabosse, as in the original production. To me, Tchaikovsky's music for the bad fairy is grotesquerie, very different from the kind of music that he would have written for a woman. But Martins' choice may be the right one for now. The nineteen-nineties have already seen more than their share of drag-queen performing, and, besides, there is much in the ballet's performance history that is worse than casting a woman as Carabosse. (There is putting her on point.) And it is to performance history that Martins continually turns for his guidelines.

THE ballet that our century knows as "The Sleeping Beauty" is not the ballet that Petipa produced for St. Petersburg. It is shorter, less spectacular, less populated, and contracted in both scale and sensibility. It is thought to represent the best of what we refer to as the Petipa tradition, but Marius Petipa would probably disown a good deal of it. Even though our productions stem from notation that was based on his, they also incorporate the changes that intervening generations saw fit to make in order to bring Petipa abreast of contemporary dance style and make him viable in the face of contemporary economics. Sometimes it's hard to tell which kind of change is operative in what we see today. In the Rose Adagio, Martins produces the standard text, unmodified by so much as a single petal. (All of the ballerina role is the standard, authorized King James Version.) But when Aurora performs the sequence of flatfoot balances in arabesque penchée, is she doing it unsupported because this production can't afford the liveried violinists whose shoulders she leaned on originally, cupping her ear on each balance? Or is it because Margot Fonteyn long ago not only did without violinists but did brilliantly without support of any kind? Whatever the reason, a passage that Petipa had imagined as a genre scene à la Watteau was converted—as was the whole of the Rose Adagio—into a study in unsupported balance.



In the Christening scene, the opening dance, an airy, gracious waltz, was assigned by Petipa to the maids and pages of the court. But custom has made it a dance for the fairies and *their* pages—the little, gift-bearing ones—and cavaliers who escort the fairies. Balanchine, borne out by the Kirov, always insisted that the cavaliers did not exist. They were inserted, probably by Diaghilev, in place of the pages in the original production. Following the waltz, we go back to Petipa, and the queen invites the fairies to dance. But they just have! You not only see the inconsistency—you hear it. When the fairies' own dance begins, it's to another kind of music—a delicate, purling andante—which lets us know we are watching divinities. Tchaikovsky's storytelling is full of subtle discriminations like this; no other composer knew so many varieties of sweetness. The fairies' music stays in character until the end of the variations, whereupon it descends to a more mundane level as they go about the business of bestowing their gifts upon the baby princess. Martins shows this business clearly—we don't have to assume that the gifts are being "bestowed" in the dancing of the variations, or rack our brains trying to guess what they are.

Martins is also very clear about the moment when Carabosse arrives, just as the Lilac Fairy is about to present the final gift. The interruption means that the “gift” of death that Carabosse brings can then be annulled by the gift of sleep. And Carabosse does bring death as a gift, the spindle resting on a cushion like all the other gifts. These details matter; you can never have enough of them, because although the story *is* static, it does have the kind of suspense that is embedded in a mass of details—it’s a true fairy-tale drama. Something terribly important is at stake, some great peril is at hand, but we can save ourselves if we follow protocol, never abandon ceremony, and do not miss a trick.

Martins sees to it that Aurora’s destiny is worked out to the letter. The Lilac Fairy mimes that the princess will be awakened by a prince wearing a feather in his hat, and, sure enough, when Désiré appears he is wearing a feather in his hat, a big blue one. The hunt scene, which I take to be Martins’ invention, is actually not a hunt but a picnic, and the prince is late. “What can be keeping him?” mimes the countess. “You know how he is,” an aide replies, but the countess, whose party this evidently is, is impatient. By the time the prince walks on, to the low-key reprise of his entrance music, we know that he doesn’t want to be here, and soon we hear the hunting horns that signal the end of the scene. The prince bids the party join the hunt without him, and everyone picks up and leaves, taking along half of what used to be the second act. It is all smoothly, even wittily, done, with Martins here accomplishing the mime equivalent of Fonteyn’s penchée balances and making a virtue of necessity. The change is organic: as supported balances change to unsupported ones, a prince who doesn’t want a party doesn’t have one.

Martins has understood, too, that, just as Aurora is chiefly a dance character, Désiré is chiefly a mime one. The sarabande soliloquy usually inserted at this point has nothing to do with Tchaikovsky’s scenario. Instead of dancing about under the trees, the prince waits alone for a long moment on an empty stage and is a hundred times as eloquently lonely.

What can ail thee, knight-at-arms? The question, which Tchaikovsky surely would have wished to ask in “Swan Lake,” had his collaborators been willing, is asked and answered here. In “The Sleeping Beauty,” Tchaikovsky is the master of the ballet stage; in “Swan Lake,” he is an apprentice. The ballets were a dozen years apart. After “Swan Lake,” we know, Tchaikovsky discovered Delibes’s “Sylvia.” He also must have absorbed a great deal of ballet history, for he pours “The Sleeping Beauty” full of it. As the Lilac Fairy approaches the lost figure of Désiré, she brings with her the yearning, the anxiety and intoxication of the Romantic ballet. From eighteenth-century court dance to nineteenth-century ballet blanc: we are sped from one dance era to the next. Désiré’s world of reasoned and refined passion is suddenly overcome by magnificent wish-fulfilling dreams: wood nymphs leap from the trees; all nature is spellbound. By cutting Désiré’s court dances, Martins leaves this part of the ballet’s meaning cursorily expressed, but the music, so abundantly alive to all aspects of the libretto, easily sustains the prince on his journey through space and time. Désiré doesn’t really enter the nineteenth century; he only beholds a vision of it—he looking forward, Petipa looking backward, each seeing Aurora as Taglioni in “La Sylphide” and himself as her contemporary. Too much fuss can be made over period correctness in “The Sleeping Beauty.” The action spans the grand siècle, but Tchaikovsky’s larger point is that dance eras don’t succeed one another in an orderly progression through time so much as they are annihilated by time and are contained one inside another, the past eclipsed by an eternal present.

It is in this scene—the Vision scene—that Martins and Mitchell reveal their most telling conceit: choreography and scenery that visually correspond. As Désiré threads his way among the nymphs in pursuit of Aurora, they form themselves into lanes and tiered groups that recall the allée or the fountain in the palace garden out of which, at one point, the Lilac Fairy rose. Now she is present to guide and restrain the headlong emotions of the prince. When Martins brings the scene to a climax, it’s with the mime speech of Désiré to Lilac—an impassioned “Take me to her, I implore you,” delivered on one knee as the strings take the melody into crescendo. When the vision ends and he’s again alone, he bounds exultingly about in a solo to the agitato reprise of the Rose Adagio theme, music that binds his destiny to Aurora’s. It’s a moment that calls for dance.

Here and there Mitchell uses the kind of lore that informs Tchaikovsky’s meditation on ballet history. The throne room where the Christening takes place is modelled, in part, on the bedroom at Blois of Marie de Medici—she who imported ballet from Italy to France. Look closely and you’ll see arms sticking out of the wall holding candelabras, a detail borrowed from Chambord by Christian Bérard for Cocteau’s “Beauty and the Beast.” But Mitchell isn’t really comfortable with fantasy. His palace exteriors are cold and without mystery, and Mark Stanley’s lighting doesn’t do much for them. The setting for the Rose Adagio, the garden at Villandry, is far too literal, with some decidedly odd-looking topiary. And it’s strange that visual projections set the style of the production but aren’t used full force when they’re really needed—after the panorama, in the prince’s approach to the castle. Following Tchaikovsky’s mobile camera through the woods and up the dust-covered stairs to the cobweb-laden bed is what Mitchell has prepared us to do, and perhaps one day we will get to do it. For now, it’s more important that the two most awkward scenic transitions be corrected.

As the Lilac Fairy casts her spell, brambles close in from both sides of the stage and vines travel upward, but so slowly that the music must be painfully dragged out. Then the music, with its beautiful diminuendo, is smothered by applause when the scrim is lowered and the projections take over. But this is nothing compared with the revving and vamping that must take place after the Awakening, when the Wedding polonaise is already under way and the bed refuses to disappear. (As it slowly moves upstage, unseen hands not designed by Bérard snatch away the bedclothes.) Martins crams the Awakening scene so full of action—uniting the lovers, reviving the court, blowing up Carabosse—that he kills it and loses the payoff for all his good work. What’s needed here is what Petipa requested of Tchaikovsky when he wanted to stretch the panorama—yard music. In the American Ballet Theatre version of 1987, which also elided Awakening and Wedding, Kenneth MacMillan resorted to a blackout and a stage wait. Martins wants the exhilaration of going from peak to rising peak. He wants to end the story but not the excitement. But he can afford to extend this scene, maybe with the aid of some transposed music. Speed mustn't be confused with momentum. Time is on the production's side, and it hardly ever is at this point in the ballet.

As for the Wedding, it holds up nicely until the principals come back for their pas de deux. Lilac presides, with a solo danced to the intrada. In the divertissement, Martins assigns an entrée to every character who appears in the polonaise; there are no extraneous Bluebeards or Goldilockses. The jewel dances bring on a Ruby, an Emerald, and a Diamond, in honor of Balanchine's "Jewels," with a Gold cavalier. Martins' interpolated choreography, like MacMillan's and like Tomasson's for San Francisco, is strong stuff technically—a bit cluttered, and uncomfortable to watch. But three Court Jesters dancing to Tom Thumb's music are rousingly good, and Red Riding Hood mimed by a child performer is surefire. So is the cat pas de deux; as danced by Yvonne Borree and Albert Evans, it actually has substance, even though some of it suggests a Heather Watts–Jock Soto duet. For the apotheosis, Martins has the king and queen abdicate and crown the lovers, who in their new robes of state mount a platform and end the ballet posed against a giant Bernini sunburst.

THE first cast had Darci Kistler, partnered by Ben Huys, and Kyra Nichols as the Lilac Fairy. Later, Nichols danced Aurora to Lindsay Fischer's Désiré; her Lilac was Maria Calegari. The old ballet can never have seen more consummate débuts. Kistler was as fragrant, as tender, as poignant as one could have wished, not just a storybook character come to life but a real human being struck down by fate. Nichols as Aurora verged on revelation. Less fanciful than Kistler, she nevertheless found textures to suggest the plane of unreality on which the vision of Aurora moves. Soft yet precise, she was like a chill running through water—rippling water that was just about to freeze. In the two other casts that I saw, Judith Fugate, partnered by Fischer, was an evenly accomplished, small, and not very eventful Aurora, while Margaret Tracey flickered hectically, now serene in renversé, now timidly daring in piqué balance, but lacking over all the plangency of phrase that would make you want to watch her. Damian Woetzel, an indifferent classical dancer these days, was no more effective as the prince than he had been earlier as the Bluebird.

Martins sees Carabosse as young and handsome, a fallen angel among the good fairies at the Christening. Two of the performances were persuasive, amazingly so when you consider how underdeveloped the acting at New York City Ballet has always been. (Martins, of course, grew up in the Royal Danish Ballet, the company with the best mime tradition in the world. It's a background that all too seldom comes into play in his work.) Merrill Ashley is a pale, slightly shrill, and somehow charming witch. In her black net evening gown and little black feathered tricorne, she descends from her coach and demands justice with her pointy chin stuck well forward and her elbows stuck well back. She's fun mainly because she's Ashley, and we've not seen her like this before. Lourdes Lopez is not fun. We've never seen her like this, either: she's still and deadly, a real black widow emerging from her web of evil, and I imagine she scares the children in the audience to bits. (Surely a reason to play the role in travesty is not to scare the children.) Ashley looks like Katharine Hepburn as Mary of Scotland, but Lopez is a living, sneering Velázquez, and the sight of her only adds to the disaster she wreaks upon the court.

Like threads in a tapestry, every detail in "The Sleeping Beauty" carries its weight of meaning. Martins pulls one of these threads when he excises Carabosse's scene with the other fairies. Especially now that from the way she looks we can imagine Carabosse once being *good*, we want to know more about her condition. And, because Tchaikovsky particularizes every scrap of moral as well as psychological information, every gesture counts. The little court not only must be seen to be protected by a benevolent Lilac Fairy, it must deserve to be protected; its king and queen must not be haughty, languorous creatures, its Catalabutte must not be silly or too feckless. N.Y.C.B.'s only good king, royal but not condescending, was Alexandre Proia; Simone Schumacher and Lauren Hauser both were warm-blooded and affectionate queens. Bart Cook and Andre Kramarevsky made Catalabutte fussy, as forgetful as all fairy-tale characters are, but an otherwise excellent fellow. Cook's way of playing to those onstage rather than to the audience made him seem the more sensitive soul—someone whose mortification you could really believe in. As Catalabutte's lackey, Tracy Bennett trotted mechanically back and forth and seemed to be playing a half-wit. The over-all mime frame of the production is just now a little thin. It needs heavier gilding to support the impasto of the dancing.

Patricia Zipprodt has designed serviceable costumes in rich materials. The colors follow no scheme, and some are dreary or garish. Aurora's birthday tutu is bright apricot; her nymphs' costumes are phlegm green. Balanchine's garland dance, with sixteen small girls augmenting the corps, is so blanketed in pea green that the audience does not see the children making their enfilade entry until they are all the way downstage. The ensembles look crowded; the late entry of the eight extra girls isn't the burst of excess that I remember. Probably, if Balanchine had known there was going to be a set with stairs, he would have allowed for it.

The company has changed a lot since Balanchine's death. The hardest change of all is the decline in musical standards. The orchestra, roofed over and miked, as it never was in Balanchine's—and Robert Irving's—day, cannot have been happy, but after two weeks it was still playing the score crudely, with a brass section that blatted and flatted, as if it were working for Carabosse. Of the three conductors, Hugo Fiorato drew the best sound from the orchestra and the best performances from the dancers. (Fugate owed her finest moments to him.) Gordon Boelzner, an excellent musician, is not yet a master of orchestral technique. Maurice Kaplow's inflexible beat lashed the dancers about the stage.

It is strange to encounter musical problems at New York City Ballet, but then it is strange to see New York City Ballet dancing "The Sleeping Beauty." How does one watch it, exactly? When I watch from the point of view of

"Sleeping Beauty" style, comparing this production with others, I'm impressed. When I watch from the point of view of N.Y.C.B. style, and think what that has meant to me over the years, I lose heart for the future. Despite the wonderful work of Nichols and other dancers in key roles, and despite a consistently excellent corps de ballet, this is stylistically a backward-looking production. Dancers are allowed to fake their technique and punch out steps the way other companies do. Yes, they dance on the music, but not, as in the old days, on *behalf* of the music. And in the Rose Adagio the company is on its knees praying to a false god. The stationary unsupported piqué balance was a touchstone of European ballerina technique in the fifties. Toumanova had popularized it; Fonteyn incorporated it into the poetry of Aurora. The touchstone of American ballerina technique in the nineties is, or should be, balance-imbalance as a constant dynamic. Does the company think that this hallmark of Balanchine was just a Suzanne Farrell specialty? It was not only the hallmark of Balanchine long before Farrell; it was the essence of exciting dancing long before Balanchine. When N.Y.C.B. ballerinas go for that first series of piqué balances in attitude, they look like dutiful dolls giving us the essence of exciting posing.

Nichols, with her exquisitely slow multiple pirouettes, proves, if proof is needed, that she has the authority to impose herself on "Petipa" the way Fonteyn did in the fifties and Maria Tallchief did in Balanchine's "Nutcracker." I don't mean that Nichols has to rip tradition apart. In the "Nutcracker" adagio, there is a hair-raising unsupported pirouette in which the ballerina turns toward, then away from, her partner; at the last second, he catches her by the wrists. There are also Aurora-like promenades in arabesque. This is a good example of how Balanchine treated traditional material, preserving the best of the old, embracing the new. And what of ballerinas outside New York City Ballet? Balanchine's "Nutcracker" is excitingly danced by Miami City Ballet because the choreography is still fresh, but the San Francisco's Elizabeth Loscavio, who, at twenty-one, is already an authoritative Aurora, hasn't much to look forward to in a role that poses no further challenges. When Petipa created Aurora as Taglioni, he did not give her Taglioni's steps—he gave her the most beautiful steps he could think of, and probably the hardest ones, too.

New York City Ballet's production was a birthday salute to Lincoln Kirstein, born May 4, 1907. Kirstein was twenty-six years old when he brought Balanchine to New York to found the School of American Ballet and, ultimately, New York City Ballet. Balanchine's name day, the feast of St. George, falls on May 6th. Following the old-style Russian calendar, he celebrated it on April 23rd. April 24th was the opening night of "The Sleeping Beauty," a ballet Balanchine had often talked of producing. Kirstein stepped before the curtain with Peter Martins, and the two of them drank a toast to Tchaikovsky, Petipa, and Balanchine. While the ballet was running at the State Theatre, Carnegie Hall celebrated its centenary. A hundred years ago, on May 5th, Tchaikovsky was there to open the hall. On his fifty-first birthday, May 7th, he conducted his Suite No. 3, which was to become a Balanchine ballet with a finale, "Theme and Variations," that pays homage to "The Sleeping Beauty." It was Tchaikovsky's first and only visit to America. (Documents from the trip are on view at the new Carnegie Hall Museum.) He also conducted the First Piano Concerto in New York (Balanchine choreographed the Second), and, in Baltimore and Philadelphia, the Serenade for String Orchestra, which became Balanchine's first ballet for American dancers. Is there more? Fonteyn, who died this spring, would have been seventy-two on May 18th.

I bring all this up not because I follow astrological signs (I don't) or because the zodiac over Aurora's castle tells us that she was born a Taurus (she was). What this strange alignment of ballet, composer, company, and interpreter suggests to me is that the present revival means something it would not have meant if it had occurred last year, as one of several centennial productions. New York City Ballet has always had a rendezvous with "The Sleeping Beauty." Whether the powers there think they have already kept it or have some way to go—that's for them to know and us to find out.

—Arlene Croce

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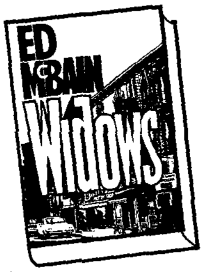

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AROUND CITY HALL

The Horribles

ON May 11th, the day after Mayor David Dinkins released his planned budget for the 1992 fiscal year, which begins on July 1st—a document, bound, appropriately, in blue, that contained so many grim provisions for cuts in city services that from the start it was known as his doomsday budget—a New York reporter got a call from a reporter for the British Broadcasting Company. The caller from London, having read about the cuts, asked whether it was safe or wise for British residents to consider visiting the city. The Mayor's budget announced that all drug-treatment clinics and all outpatient pharmacies in city hospitals would be closed, that schoolchildren's health programs and programs for reducing the infant-mortality rate would end, that twenty-nine thousand city employees would be laid off, that the number of shelters for the homeless would be reduced, that the beloved Central Park Zoo would be shut down, and that twenty-five per cent of the city's street lights would be turned off. State Comptroller Edward Regan immediately identified the announced closing of the zoo as "nothing more than a metaphor" that "would never happen." The annual cost of the zoo to the city was just over two million dollars in a twenty-eight-and-a-half-billion-dollar budget, but the possibility of its loss could be counted on to set off cries of pain among New Yorkers and thus dramatize the city's financial plight. The switching off of seventy-four thousand light bulbs was also a heavy-handed metaphor, which could be suitably illustrated by some of those cartoons in which the last person to leave a purportedly doomed city is requested to turn out the lights.

There were some clues suggesting that, despite the new budget's dark messages—when John Lindsay was mayor, his staff used to refer to the threat of having to lay off thousands of workers as "the horribles"—Dinkins did not expect that all the announced reductions in the quality of city life would necessarily take place. During the May 10th press conference on the budget, he mentioned the importance to New York of revenues from tourism: about a billion dollars a year. It was hard to see how he could be certain that visitors from around the nation and the world—from London, for example—would in the future hurry here for the privilege of groping through the dimly lighted streets of a city in which six homicides are committed every twenty-four hours. One reporter asked whether Dinkins had considered the effect of the reduced local circumstances on those attending the Democratic National Convention, which is to be held here in July, 1992 (although, of course, there are Republicans who would argue that it doesn't matter what conditions are wherever the Democrats meet next year: the Convention—and the Democrats generally—will be a hopeless mess anyhow). Winning the Convention for the city was one of Dinkins' proudest achievements. Eighteen flags were hung in the City Council chamber for the announcement, last July, and the Marine hymn was played as the Mayor, a onetime marine, marched up the aisle. In response to the question about the Convention at the budget press conference Dinkins said the fact that it would be held here was a major reason that state legislators must come up with the money that would prevent the crippling cuts from having to be made.

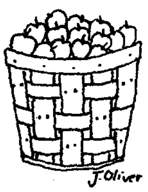
He Knows His Rights

There was some irony in Dinkins' presenting such an alarmist budget apparently in order to get the attention of other important players in the crisis. Since last fall, many of the city's fiscal advisers had been trying to get the Mayor to focus his attention on the seriousness of the city's fiscal condition at a time when he continued to raise the wages of city employees, adding to the prospective budget deficit, and to declare that the financial experts' predictions of a large budget gap in the coming fiscal year were way off the mark. In October, he announced that the city would probably have to lay off fifteen thousand workers. In January, when virtually none had been laid off, he said that the total would be sixteen thousand. As of this month, about eleven hundred had left the city payroll, all of them so-called provisionals—that is, they had not got their jobs through the large municipal unions, whose help, as the Mayor often points out, made possible his extremely narrow victory in the 1989 mayoral election.

Dinkins' very bad-news budget comes at a time when life here has already been getting worse notices than ever. This may have something to do with the fact that in television shows and movies New York is so often the scene of the crime. Of the five movies nominated this year for an Oscar as the best film, four were set here, and three of them—"GoodFellas," "Godfather III," and "Ghost"—showed the city as a place of terrible violence. (The winning film, however, was "Dances with Wolves," in which—some nonfans of New York in the great Out There might say—the wild animals were four-footed.) The critics who have lately been giving life in this city an unusually bad rap have not necessarily been out-of-towners. On a "Saturday Night Live" rerun this month, Joe Mantegna presented himself as a local resident who was live from New York—but just barely. He reported having been "beat up, stabbed, doused with gasoline, and pushed off of buildings." But then, he said, that is "the price you pay for living in the most vibrant city in the world."

Some of the most scathing versions

of life here lately have come from local commentators who at other times have proclaimed that they love the city with a passion. Last month, in a column that appeared in the *Post* under the headline "A SPRINGTIME STROLL IN THE CITY OF THE DAMNED," Pete Hamill described moving about the streets and confronting one grisly sight after another, from piles of garbage to human piles of the homeless. ("O New York: city of wonders.") In March, Michael Specter had reported in the Washington *Post* that he had encountered many of the same grim spectacles here—especially those involving the homeless. Although he lives in a "relatively affluent area" of the city, he was having a dreadful time of it. "I have never been on a street, a subway or in a train station here without some person accosting me," he wrote. The per-capita number of homeless is considerably higher in Washington, the city from which he had recently moved, but, as he noted, they keep themselves more out of sight there. In New York, Specter explained, "there is really nowhere to scare the homeless to." Darwin came to his mind, and so did Dickens: "Dickens could not have invented this vision of hell." The headline over his report was "CALCUTTA ON THE HUDSON." He was apparently not aware of how old hat—old, battered, probably spat-upon hat—the comparison with Calcutta was around here. Bishop Paul Moore, in his 1988 Christmas Day sermon at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, described New York as "a Calcutta of the West." That same month, the *Times* began running a series of editorial comments under the logo "New Calcutta," reminding New Yorkers of how wretched conditions were in their city, particularly on its streets. After a time, however, the paper received a letter from a frequent visitor to Calcutta declaring that in fact it was Calcutta that was getting a bad rap. Calcutta, the writer said, was a relatively pleasant place to live, pleasanter than New York, and the homeless were better cared for there. The *Times* later ditched the New Calcutta theme, and began another series of editorial comments on what was wrong with the city, under the logo "First, Reclaim the Streets," which concentrated not on garbage or the homeless but, in response to last summer's crime wave here, on crime.



By coincidence, it seems, the name of the *Times'* new series was a variation on the title of a commentary on local life that had appeared in the paper some years earlier. In June of 1973, a mayoral-election year, Roger Starr, who was then the head of a private group called the Citizens Housing and Planning Council and has been since 1977 a member of the *Times* editorial board, wrote, in the *Times Magazine*, under the heading "First, Clean the Streets," an open letter of advice to whoever would be the city's new mayor. John Lindsay had announced the previous March that he would not be a candidate for a third term, and the mayoral nominees had not yet been chosen. Since the new man at City Hall couldn't hope to improve all aspects of local government, Starr wrote, he should concentrate on projects like cleaning the streets, an area of government "at once serious, capable of real improvement, and *highly visible*." Then, Starr advised the incoming mayor, if he should later be accused of corruption or dirty politics, "Remind them of how well you cleaned the streets."

AS it happened, the major difficulty that faced Abraham Beame, who was elected mayor that fall, was neither corruption nor dirty politics but a fiscal crisis, which in the years since has been referred to here in almost the same tone of voice the Irish use in speaking of the Troubles. The tone has been heard rather often in recent weeks, as the city has confronted financial problems that some experts believe are of similar magnitude. In the Troubles of 1975, the banks cut off New York's credit, the result being near-bankruptcy, from which the city was rescued by the newly elected governor of the state, Hugh Carey. In June of 1975, Carey established the Municipal Assistance Corporation—known as MAC—which, backed by the credit of the state, was empowered to borrow money for the city. Then, that September, Carey set up the Emergency Financial Control Board—one of its members was Felix Rohatyn, an investment banker with Lazard Frères, who was the head of MAC—and for most purposes it presided over the finances of the city, which thus for a time existed in a form of receivership. In order to ease the city's financial burdens, the Control Board laid off twenty-seven thousand employees, an action that Beame, a product of the Brooklyn Democratic clubhouses, was generally believed to have been politically incapable of taking; in all, through attrition and the state's assumption of city obligations such as funding for the courts and the City University's senior colleges, the city payroll was reduced by more than sixty thousand people over the next year or so. Eventually, as times got better nationally, they improved here, too, and the function of the Financial Control Board—the word "Emergency" was dropped from its title in 1978—was formally reduced to monitoring and issuing advisories on the city's financial condition. However, its power over the city can be reactivated under certain circumstances, such as the city's inability to sell its bonds, or its ending a fiscal year with a deficit of a hundred million dollars or more.

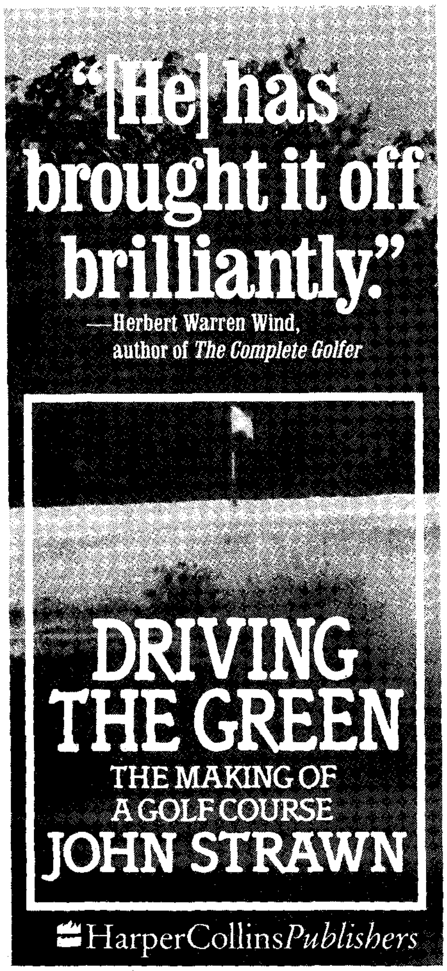
Last February, the Washington *Post*, which does not shrink from its obligation to report on just how bad things are in this city, was at it again, running an article recalling the sad fiscal-crisis days, when the number of street-cleaners here fell from twenty-five hundred to fewer than eight hundred. "Uncontrollable filth became the most obvious symbol of a city losing control," it reported. "The mess helped to send thousands to live in the suburbs, never to return, and made the nation wonder whether the city could manage civic responsibilities for its residents." The paper did not go into the fact that according to the 1990 census five per cent of the District of Columbia's population, for whatever reason, had left town in the nineteen-eighties, while—to general surprise, here and elsewhere, in view of the terrible notices—in the same decade New York gained nearly three hundred thousand residents, or half the population of Washington. The *Post* article reported that because of cuts in the Sanitation Department's budget the garbage-pileup days of the fiscal crisis were happening here all over again. It quoted John Doherty, the Sanitation Department's deputy commissioner for operations, as saying, "My greatest fear is that we will see whole areas of the city where streets are just going to be blocked off by garbage." The *Post* predicted, with perhaps unseemly enthusiasm, "City streets now merely dirty could be over-flowing with refuse when the warm weather arrives this spring."

Dinkins' executive budget, released on May 10th, showed that the Sanitation Department's six-hundred-and-forty-five-million-dollar 1990 budget had been or would be reduced by twenty per cent in the 1991 and 1992 fiscal years. All recycling would be suspended for a year. The so-called Clean Team had already been eliminated, so the city's street-cleaners had fallen below seven hundred, lower than the number during the 1975 fiscal crisis. Mechanical sweeping for highways, malls, and industrial routes would also end, and so would special pickups at schools and housing projects. It was evident that, whatever other problems might confront the city's present mayor, he would not be able to remind people of how well he cleaned the streets.

ALL hard-times budget seasons have a common language, starting with your basic "Draconian." Draco was an Athenian legislator in the seventh century B.C. who drew up a code of laws imposing such severe penalties—nearly every violation was a capital offense—that it was later described as having been written in blood. "Mr. Mayor, if you insist on this Draconian budget, the blood of our children will be on your hands" was the message on one sign in City Hall Park the other morning protesting the cuts in programs for children. Other demonstrators wore black armbands and carried signs saying "Dinkins Budget = Death Sentence," because of the cuts in programs for the poor and the homeless, New Yorkers whose concerns Dinkins had been expected to be particularly attentive to.

There have been some additions to the usual bad-news-budget rhetoric this year. The New York State budget, which Dinkins complains daily does not give the city money that, in his view, the state has an obligation to provide, was denounced by Charles Cook, a Republican state senator from upstate Delaware County, as so overgenerous to the city's five boroughs as to be "a Scud missile aimed directly at the hearts of upstaters." The State Senate is controlled by Republicans, all but a handful of them from outside the city, while Democrats, mostly downstaters, preside over the State Assembly. One result of this built-in clash of interests is that the state budget, which was supposed to take effect on April 1st, had still not been passed seven weeks later; the uncertainty over how much extra money the state would eventually come up with for the city has been a major element in Dinkins' financial fix.

Another new budget-season word this year has been "mantra," which is literally a mystical formula of incantation among Hindus and Buddhists, and has been favored by *Newsday* editorial writers to describe, approvingly, Dinkins' promise, in a March 20th letter to agency heads, to try to achieve "structural balance"—that is, the financing of city services and workers' salaries entirely with recurring revenues. One question that is often raised is whether the city can afford to do all the things it now takes responsibility for—should it, for example, have sixteen municipal hospitals? Still another budget term that has been used quite a bit this year is "jump-start," which needs no scholarly definition. The Mayor, who often gives the impression that he is almost passively waiting for someone else among the budget-season players to take the actions or make the concessions that will bring big, relieved smiles to City Hall, is frequently urged to "jump-start" negotiations with unions, for example, or with the legislators in Albany. However, the opinion in that city that he has taken an overpresumptuous view of the state's obligation to help him out is not entirely a partisan, or even a geographical, proposition. The state's most powerful Democrat, Governor Mario Cuomo (a resident of Queens), keeps pointing out that the state faces a deficit of its own, which he has put at six and a half billion dollars, and mentions the Mayor's generosity to the city's labor unions. "You come up here and say you're in trouble because you didn't get six hundred million from us, when you spent a billion dollars on salary increases," he said last February, and he accused the city of engaging in "disconnect logic." After all, Cuomo had imposed a hiring freeze on state employees months earlier, and, at considerable political peril, has insisted that there be no raises for state employees this year. Dinkins responded by commenting on what he saw as tightfistedness toward the city in the Governor's proposed budget: "I am particularly concerned that the pro-


"[He] has brought it off brilliantly."
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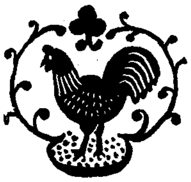
posed reductions will hurt our most vulnerable residents, especially our children." His choice of cuts in his doomsday budget this month included many that hurt the city's most vulnerable residents, and the hope might well be that public anger against such cuts would be directed at the Governor, the Legislature, the Municipal Assistance Corporation (which has the power to advance the city money beyond the half billion it provided in the current fiscal year), the City Council (which shares responsibility for the budget with the Mayor and has the power to raise property taxes), and, perhaps, the labor leaders, rather than at the Mayor.

Mitchell Moss, a professor of political science at New York University, described Dinkins' budget maneuvers this month to William Murphy, *Newsday's* City Hall bureau chief, as "Houdini politics." The Mayor, Moss said, "is tying himself up and calling on the governor and the unions and the City Council to untie him." Peter Vallone, the Speaker of the City Council, said—not coming off as very sympathetic—that the Mayor's problem is "he may drown before anybody gets around to unlocking him."

ACCORDING to one theory, Dinkins is at a disadvantage in the present financial infighting because by nature he is far too well-mannered to throw tantrums and get down-and-dirty with his adversaries, who in the view of many of his supporters are giving him an unnecessarily bad time. Edward Koch, his immediate predecessor, would, for the most part, win his battles in Albany for state funds, though he might emerge from such encounters in a state of dishevelment, snarling that the legislators were "saplings." In the nineteen-sixties, Lindsay, after a session in Albany at which he got most of what he wanted, was described as looking "like someone who had just been rescued from the sharks." Dinkins, on the other hand, is likely to refer to fellow-officials as "my distinguished friends." And while other politicians tend to get quite emotional in public about issues that mean a great deal to their administrations, Dinkins' approach is likely to be more measured—which some of his advisers believe is another disadvantage. On the day after a televised speech laying out his Draconian budget, the Mayor met with several hundred community-board members to explain what it would mean to them. One member of the audience asked how he could support cuts that would harm the very people he had promised to help, especially the city's children, whom in his inauguration speech he had called "our most precious possession." In trying to answer, Dinkins became so emotional that he choked up. When a similar question was raised that same afternoon at a press conference, tears came to his eyes as he said, "This administration cares deeply." As reporters left the room, a top member of his staff suggested, in a low voice, "Put that in the paper."



When Dinkins is asked about crime in the city—the homicides have not gone down, despite the billion-eight-hundred-million-dollar anticrime plan on which his administration is embarked—he frequently shifts the conversation to recall, in an aggrieved voice, that during last summer's crime wave a local paper (it was the *Post*) ran the banner headline "DAVE, DO SOMETHING." "It was as if I had pulled the trigger," he complains. In fact, the headline was intended to remind him that he is the mayor, the man with responsibility for dealing with what goes wrong here—something it is not always clear that Dinkins has entirely grasped. He does take obvious delight in the perquisites of the office and the ceremonial trappings of being mayor—understandably, since just six years ago he was holding down the position of city clerk, a Democratic clubhouse appointment whose major assignment is performing marriages, and his only previous elected city position was a stint as Manhattan borough president, in the four years before he became mayor. The evening of his televised speech on the budget, there were nineteen flags on the platform behind him—nine American flags, nine city flags, and a black M.I.A. banner. This time, the Marine hymn was not played, and, of course, there is no municipal equivalent of "Hail to the Chief."

On a wall of Room 9, the grubby, cluttered City Hall pressroom just off the rotunda, is an oil portrait of William Gaynor, New York's mayor from 1910 to 1913, who didn't give a fig for the ceremonial aspects of mayoral life, and took hold so vigorously—and often irascibly—of his responsibilities for running the city as he thought it should be done that he permanently alienated the leaders of the local Democratic Party, who had got him elected. Several of his obituaries put in capital letters the last four, bold words at the close of a letter that, not long before his term was about to end, he wrote to City Hall reporters: "I have had a pretty hard time for four years to hold my own against *all* comers . . . but I have been mayor." No one knows, of course, how Gaynor would have reacted to the proposal that the financial powers of his administration be taken over by a state control board. It seems likely that he would have approved of the indignant words—though not the well-modulated tones—in which the present mayor insists that such a development would constitute a usurpation of New Yorkers' civil rights as free citizens. "Nobody ever elected the Control Board to anything," Dinkins has frequently said. In fact, this demonstrates that even the most earnestly well-behaved of politicians may commit untruths from time to time if it suits their purposes. Three of the Control Board's seven members are appointed by the governor from the private sector; of the other four, the state and city comptrollers are elected by the people, as are the governor, who is the board's chairman, and the mayor. Some financial experts are not convinced that a temporary reactivation of the Control Board would be the worst solution for the city. The Mayor could blame the Control Board for any harsh—and politically painful—actions. However, what Dinkins surely has in mind is that the man who was in charge of the city when it was ignominiously taken over by the Control Board, Abraham Beame, then became the only mayor in this century who was defeated for reëlection after a single four-year term.

On May 15th, it was announced that Felix Rohatyn, who got credit for a major role in saving the city sixteen years ago, was ready to try again. The Municipal Assistance Corporation, of which he is the head, would provide the city with a billion dollars over the next four years, doing so by refinancing—by selling bonds, giving the money to the city, and buying more bonds, with later maturity dates, which coming generations (the precious children) would pay back. Rohatyn specified, however, that MAC could provide the money only if the Control Board would certify, at intervals, that the city was restructuring its government in such a way that its expenditures would truly balance its revenues. Thus the Board, the great usurper, would be in the picture anyhow. The Mayor said that any surrendering of the city's control of its destiny was unacceptable. The unacceptable fell through, in any case. Standard & Poor's, the city's bond-rating agency, announced that such a maneuver could lead to the immediate downgrading of the city's bonds, meaning that New York would then have to pay higher interest on what it borrowed—if it could borrow at all. Rohatyn withdrew his proposal. The Governor said he agreed with the Mayor that the Control Board option should be avoided at all costs: in the midst of a state financial crisis, Cuomo is hardly keen on adding to his own problems that of having to take the heat as chairman of a board that decides how the city should spend its money. For the moment, it was back to the horribles. There was nothing for it, the Governor advised the Mayor, but to go with the doomsday budget while Cuomo continued to put the arm on state legislators. The cries of the bands of New Yorkers marching in City Hall Park to protest the cuts—some of which could still, of course, turn out to be metaphors—grow more anguished each day.

Although it may not comfort the marchers, the Association for a Better New York is getting ready to try to counter all the city's bad movie notices by bringing out a book this fall called "This Is Really a Great City (I Don't Care What Anybody Says)," a title borrowed, with Woody Allen's permission, from "Manhattan." Inside the book, accompanied by suitably winning illustrations, will be five hundred other friendly pronouncements about New York from other movies, including Kermit the Frog's "I'm still here and I'm staying. You hear that, New York? The frog is staying," from "The Muppets Take Manhattan"; "New York, you got air you can sink your teeth into," from "Pillow Talk"; and, from "Crocodile Dundee," "Imagine! Seven million people all wantin' to live together! Yup—New York must be the friendliest place on earth."

—ANDY LOGAN

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BOOKS

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Siro, by David Ignatius (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $19.95). Ruthlessly proficient Soviet antagonists and plots that fast-forward to the brink of apocalypse—the faded recent conventions of the espionage novel—have given way to stories that rewind to the first marginal rumblings of the Soviet debacle. In the case of Mr. Ignatius's dry and ingenious tale, the year is 1979, and the Iranian revolution has reduced morale in the C.I.A. to a new low. Edward Stone, an elegant agency veteran of the glory days, one of "the glistening heirs of 1945," responds with a plan to undermine the Soviets in their own back yard, and launches an unauthorized, off-the-shelf operation designed to convince the K.G.B. that the West is fomenting rebellion among the ethnic nationalities of the Caucasus and Central Asia. He recruits a young scholar of Ottoman history, Anna Barnes, as part of his cynical and ultimately beside-the-point exercise, and Anna's naïveté and misgivings contribute a fine counterpoint to this novel's gripping study of intelligence protocol and of the American propensity to exploit provisional foreign allies and then, with bland geopolitical coldness, abandon them.

Jane Fairfax, by Joan Aiken (St. Martin's; $17.95). Ms. Aiken, a highly regarded writer of children's books as well as of adult novels, is also the author of a sequel to Jane Austen's "Mansfield Park" ("Mansfield Revisited"). Now she turns up with a hybrid called "Jane Fairfax," which runs parallel to "Emma," telling us a lot more than we want, or need, to know about the enigmatic second lead of Austen's great novel. Competent and even intelligent as Ms. Aiken's fantasy is, its effect is pernicious. When she starts weaving Emma's and Miss Bates's "real" words into her own mild story, she is both confusing her audience and deluding herself. Readers can only hope that they will manage to forget Ms. Aiken's projections of what Jane and Frank Churchill actually said to each other, and of Jane's earlier, disappointed love life, before they sit down again with the real thing.

The Planets, by James Finney Boylan (Poseidon; $18.95). One hardly knows where to start in describing this idiosyncratic and very funny novel. For one thing, wacky things happen to the characters, who are the remaining denizens of a Pennsylvania town where a mine fire has lingered for over twenty years, filling the air with smoke and melting snow on the ground. For another, *they* are wacky. Such connections as they make with each other are fortuitous—often disastrously so, as when one lands on top of another while attempting her first (and last) skydive, or when the person she lands on wakes to find herself naked in a canoe floating downstream. By themselves, these events may sound too exaggerated and grotesque to be funny, but the thoughts in the characters' heads render it all high comedy. Through what amounts to a complicated chain reaction, all thirteen of the leading characters do eventually connect, mostly in an abandoned high school where a science-fair exhibit has moldered since some of them were students, and the disasters accumulate with manic energy.

GENERAL

President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime, by Lou Cannon (Simon & Schuster; $24.95). A superlative study of a President and his Presidency, written by the Washington *Post's* White House correspondent during the Reagan years. Mr. Cannon tells us that his fascination with his subject dates back to 1965, when Reagan was running for governor of California and he was a reporter on the San Jose *Mercury-News*. Reagan, his charm and popularity, and his opponents' underestimation of his appeal all puzzled Mr. Cannon; this is the third book he has written in an effort to understand the man, and it is a triumphant portrait. For the most part, Mr. Cannon relies on his own reporting, which has been thorough and thoughtful. Though he doesn't palliate Reagan's inconsistencies, mistakes, or failings, his approach is never politically partisan, and his detached assessment provides depth by portraying reality, not arguing about it. His accounts of the small army of people who worked for (and often tried to manipulate) Reagan are stunning, too, offering a cross-section of political temperaments and opinions in America in the nineteen-eighties.

The Litigation Explosion: What Happened When America Unleashed the Lawsuit, by Walter K. Olson (Dutton; $24.95). This brisk, bright book explains that there are two reasons for the proliferation of lawsuits in recent decades: the unintended effects of well-meant legal reforms, and greed. Mr. Olson reminds us that litigation used to be considered a last resort, which legal procedures, laws, and legal ethics tried to avoid. But members of the bar and the bench gradually became convinced that earlier procedures and rules were cumbersome. "What began as a page out of Dickens ended as a page out of Kafka," Mr. Olson says. Procedural rules that demanded precision in allegations gave way to laxity both in the statement of claims and in the concept of relevance, while the hope that the changes would enable the poor and powerless to challenge the rich and powerful has been largely unrealized. Mr. Olson has some suggestions for reforming our unsuccessful reforms; what's really striking in his book, though, is the clarity with which he expounds legal theories and complexities.

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[*Douglas Davis in the Australian*]

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Highway range estimates are obtained by multiplying EPA highway estimates by the fuel tank capacity in gallons.

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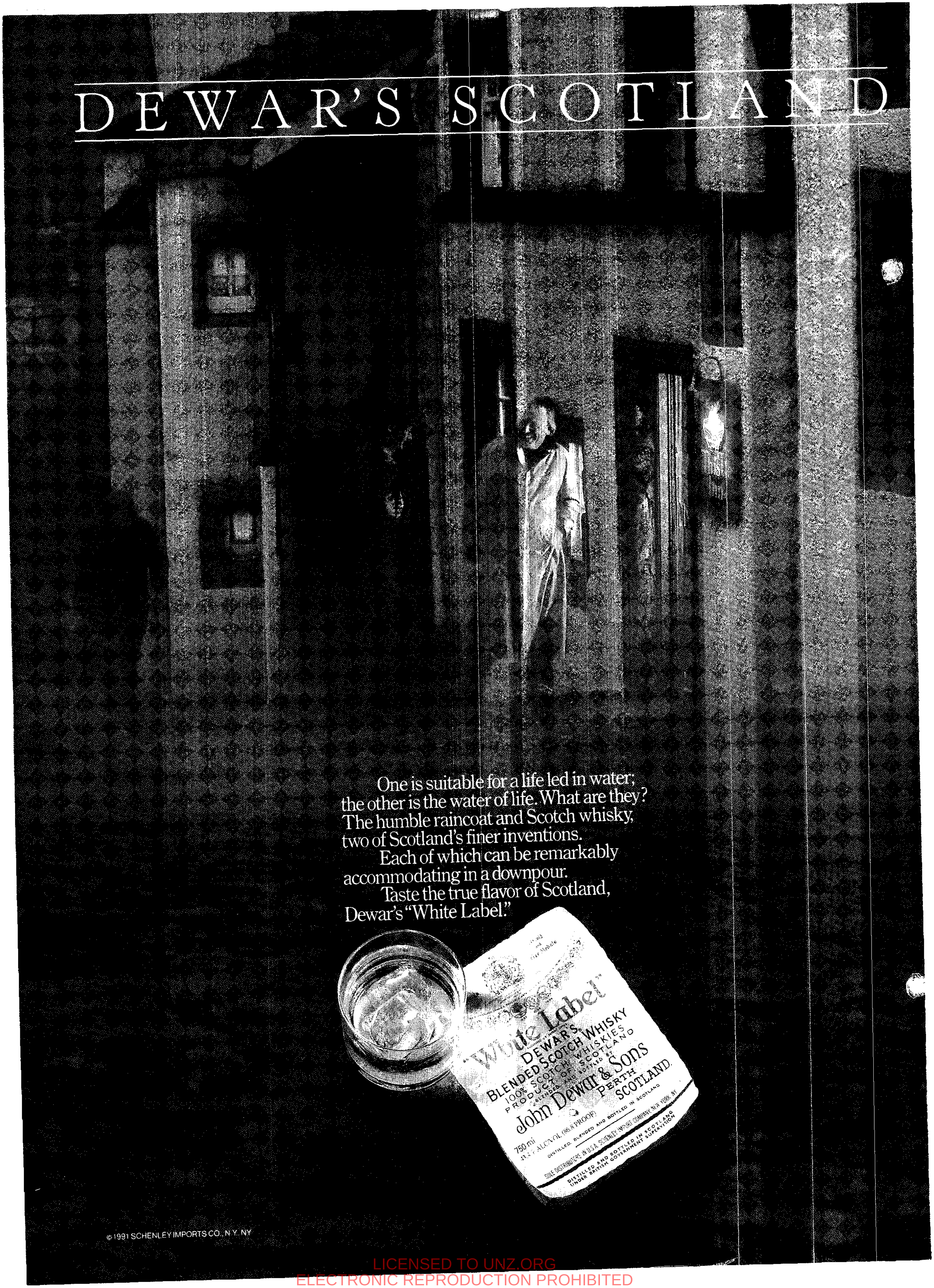
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BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY
100% SCOTCH WHISKIES
PRODUCT OF SCOTLAND
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John Dewar & Sons
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750 ml
ALCOHOL (86.8 PROOF)
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